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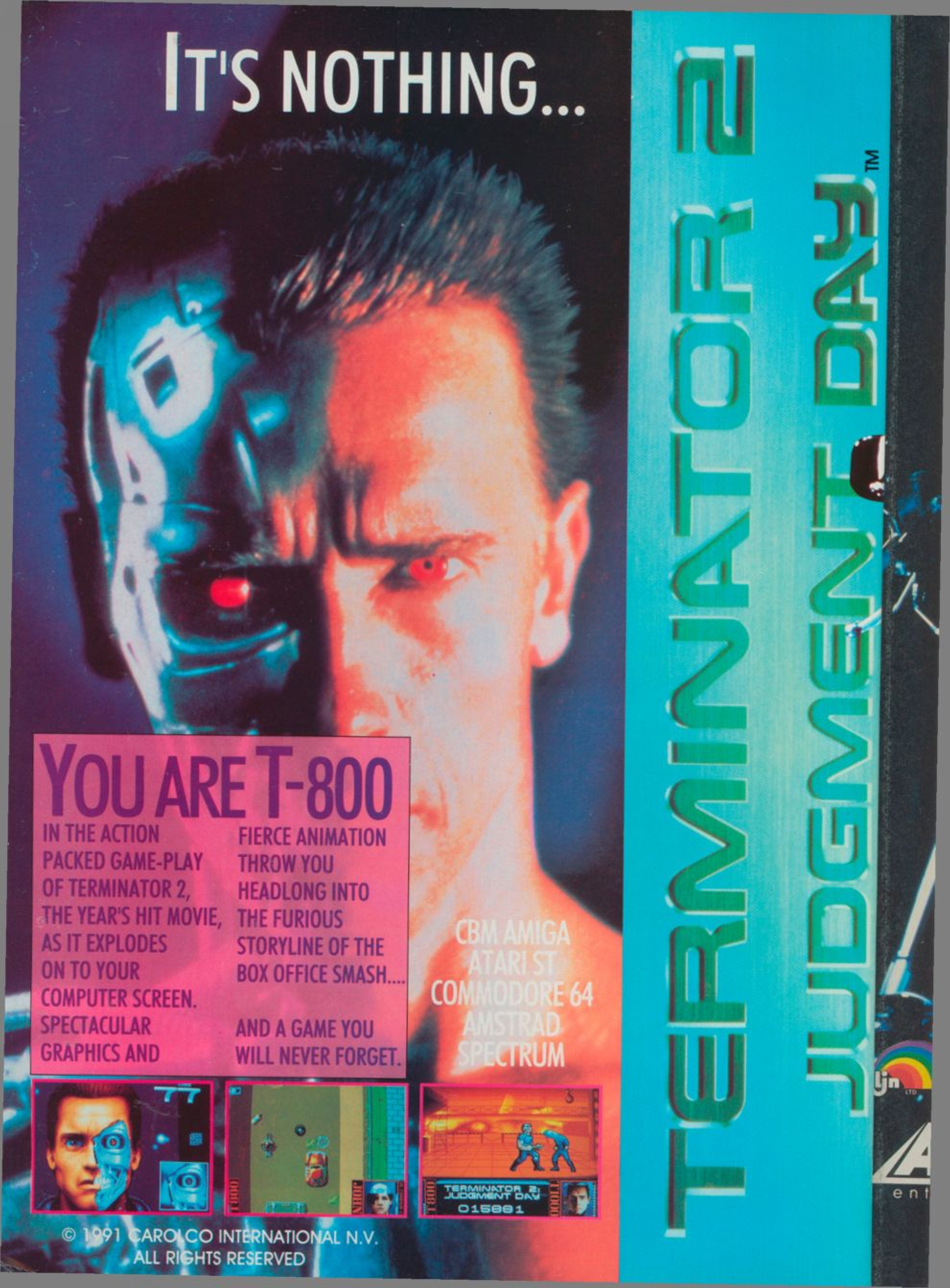
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"Only the spirit of attack born in a brave heart will bring success to any fighter aircraft, no matter how highly developed it may be."

Luftwaffe General Adolf Galland.

reviews

The latest software releases rated

ON COMPUTER AND CONSOLE *pages 51-81*

71 **BUSTER DOUGLAS BOXING** *Megadrive*
67 **EA HOCKEY** *Electronic Arts*
52 **F117a** *Microprose*
60 **MAGIC POCKETS** *Renegade*
56 **MEGA lo MANIA** *Mirrorsoft*
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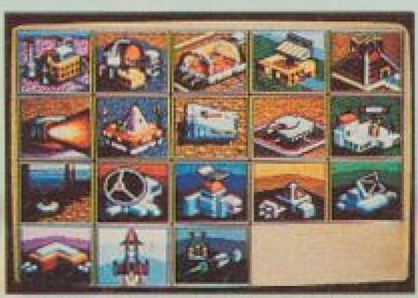
72 **STORM LORD** *Megadrive*
76 **SIMPSONS** *Ocean*
52 **THUNDERHAWK** *Core Design*
74 **WING COMMANDER 2** *Mindscape*

The Godfather **is possibly one of the most ambitious movie conversions ever. ACE takes a look at the progress made so far. Page 39**



Magic Pockets **from the Bitmap Bros is very much a new direction for the previously rock 'ard games producers. Have they gone soft? Page 60**

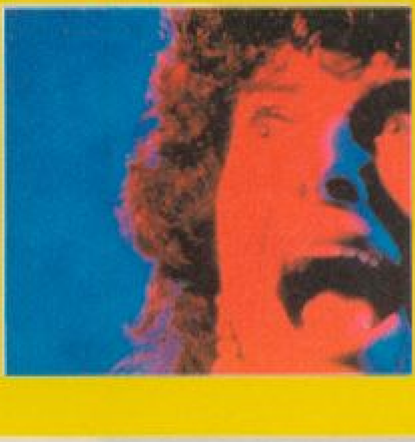
Our new cloaking device is a glorious success.

Wing Commander 2 **from Mindscape. Are you up to the challenge posed by the evil Kilrathi? See for yourself on page 74.**

AAAAARGH!

No place for weak-stomached little cry babies, the rough and tough gamesworld. With scenes of gore and violent death around every corner, it's best to have a good meal and a sit down before going *anywhere* near some of the more enthusiastically messy titles.

But let's face it, you can't beat a bit of splatter for healthy entertainment. And so it's with this is mind that we thought it would be fun to cast our minds back to some of the more memorable moments of mess. Where's the brown bag?



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Spaceship Warlock on the Macintosh is certainly one of the best titles to appear for the machine, and could even be argued - at a pinch - to be a genuine interactive movie. Take a gander at page 24

GAMES BLITZ!

You would not *believe* the software we've seen this month. Well, you wouldn't unless we'd filled the whole issue with it. Just taking a gander through the breakdown of games features this month is enough to get your head spinning. For a start there's a round up of gorey games, and then a swift look at a new *Kick Off* beater from Sensible Software. Then there's a report for all you lucky console people on *Kick Off* on *your* machine. Fantasy fans can drool over Gremlin's *Daemonsgate* and *Mega lo Mania* from Mirrorsoft, there's enough weirdness in Renegade's *Magic Pockets* to keep anyone happy and along with *The Simpsons, Wing Commander 2, Robin Hood, EA Hockey and The Godfather,* even the most choosey gamer will find plenty of interest. So get going!

features

20 GORE BLIMEY!

ACE bravely examines the seamier, more salacious side of software to remind those gamers with a penchant for splatter of the very finest moments in computer game shlock. Sick-bags, if you insist "ahoy".

22 MIND MACHINE

What is it about ST owners? Are they unusually tense or something? Drink too much caffeine? Whatever the reason, the people behind the latest piece of skull-soothing technology want *you* to strap some flashing lights to your head.

24 SPACESHIP WARLOCK

Macintosh owners have never had it so good. Full colour digitised and hand-drawn graphics telling an interactive roller-coaster ride through the space lanes from the author of *Shatter.*

28 SENSIBLE SOCCER

Refreshed from their recent world domination with *Mega lo Mania* (see page 56) Sensible Software are prepared to embark on a far tougher challenge, producing a *real Kick Off* beater.

30 KONSOLE KICK-OFF!!!

YES! YES! YES! You lucky people! Performing a lightning middle-of-the-night/ end-of-the-schedule raid on Anco HQ, we scoop the WORLD to bring you this totally exclusive report!

35 IN THE WORKS

There's a million development stories in the big software city. And these are just four of them.

- Daemonsgate
- Godfather
- Grand Prix
- Hudson Hawk

REGULARS

7 ACE GAMES NEWS

Latest news on the games scene from Programmer meetin', exclusive dealin', no cheatin', no bullshit eatin', news huntin', up frontin' straight up Rik Haynes!

11 ACE TECH NEWS

Technojunk of the highest order from around the globe.

14 LETTERS

Views and how do you do's from your good selves.

84 TRICKS'n'TACTICS

Stuck, stranded, stumped or stuffed? Help is at hand.

THE CHANGING FACE OF ACE

Time waits, as the saying goes, for no magazine. And so next month, to coincide with our 50th issue we're changing ACE in more ways than you would believe.

See page 32

Grand Prix Formula 1 from Microprose. Best race game *ever??!!* Read the report on page 44

COVER STORY

F117a is probably going to clean the floor with the competition when it's released in October. Microprose are understandably proud of their latest creation, but does it really offer the player anything new or just a lot of nice graphic improvements sewn onto a reworking of the original title?

Takes a slightly closer look under the canopy with our three page special on page 52.

OCTOBER 1991

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NEWS GAMES NEWS GAMES

World Cup Rugby *seems to be receiving a new lease of life with both TV coverage and a computer game from Domark who believe their software 'is to rugby what* Kick Off *is to football'. Claims don't get any bolder than that, do they?*

Rik Haynes gets to grip with the latest releases from Europe, Japan and the USA...

The Simpsons

Regarded by many as the hottest game in the arcades at the moment, Konami is currently converting *The Simpsons* hit coin-op to major micro formats. Based around the cult cartoon TV series, *The Simpsons* is a dedicated four-player upright game fielding a great sense of humour and off-beat action.

Players acting on behalf of Homer, Marge, Lisa and Bart must rescue baby Maggie, who has been kidnapped by thieves in pursuit of a stolen diamond. The family fend off the crooks by using ordinary household items like Marge's vacuum cleaner and Lisa's jump-rope. *The Simpsons'* frantic fun eventually leads the rescuers to Homer's environmentally-unfriendly place of work - the local nuclear power plant - where they tackle a right hard geezer.

"Bart Simpson has quickly become an entertaining character of rebellion and radical humour for both children and adults," remarks Brian Dimick at Konami's Computer Software Division.

To bring the characters and their personalities to life, Konami created the game with the assistance of *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening.

***The Simpsons* are hugely popular in the USA. Over 27 million viewers tune into their show on the Fox Channel every week. Anti-hero Bart Simpson even became a rap star earlier this year when his catchy 'Do the Bartman' single stormed up the charts.**

Everybody is trying to muscle in on the marketing opportunities. Universal Studios is about to open a *Simpsons* attraction at their theme park in Florida and Burger King recently ran a hugely successful *Simpsons* gift promotion in America and over here. Bart baby will have his own float in a Thanksgiving Day Parade in a couple of months. About the only thing he hasn't done is run for President. Yet.

As for the arcade game, several European software publishers are believed to be bidding for what could be the license of the year after *Terminator 2*. A deal and release date are likely to be announced soon.

Castlevania IV

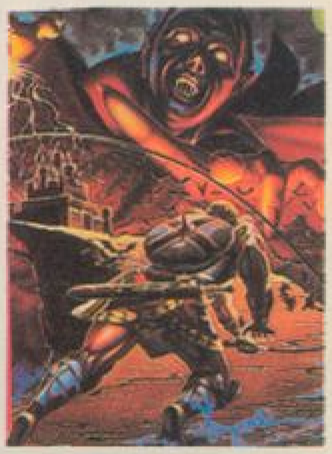
Konami, one of the leading third-party suppliers of video games for Nintendo systems, is set to introduce a 'blood-curdling cartridge' to support the new Super NES.

Taking advantage of the superior graphics and sound capabilities of the Super NES, Castlevania IV is a continuation of the mega-hit series.

This intense arcade-adventure game, in the classic Japanese style, offers the player more than 10 haunting stages to explore. Dracula has returned to terrorise the Belmont family and players must tackle many spooky dangers before they can confront the vicious vampire.

As Simon Belmont, players will travel through torture chambers, forests, underground caves and a myriad of other settings. Falling snakes, people-eating plants and attacking pictures are among the many evil entities to be encountered in Castlevania IV. A password feature allows you to take a break if things get too tense.

Would you be willing to accept an invitation to a ghoulish ghost party?



***Castlevania* has already enjoyed considerable success on the old NES, selling over one million copies since its introduction a few years ago.**

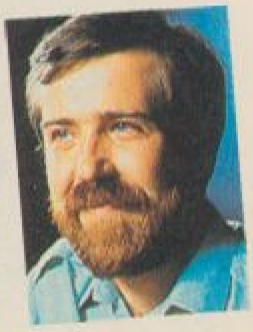
Super Tetris

A direct successor to the award-winning arcade puzzle game is fast approaching and the people at Spectrum Holobyte are promising this sequel will take advantage of the latest technology and create new challenges for *Tetris* addicts.

"Although more difficult," says spokeswoman Liz Rich, "*Super Tetris* will retain the original's easy to learn and hard to put down nature."

All the mind teasers in the *'Tris* series are software titles with simplicity that belies addicting challenge. Keen reflexes and rapid thinking is the order of play as you swap, flip and drop blocks down into columns at the bottom of the screen. No wonder Nintendo choose the original Tetris as the perfect game to accompany the Gameboy handheld console.

Like its predecessor, *Super Tetris* is being designed by the Soviet games-master Alexey Pajitnov. Graphic artists at Spectrum Holobyte will enrich the game with newly-drawn scenes from Russian culture and festive theme music will mark each level.



Alexey Pajitnov, the programming genius from Russia, just can't stop producing *Tetris*-style games. It must be in his blood

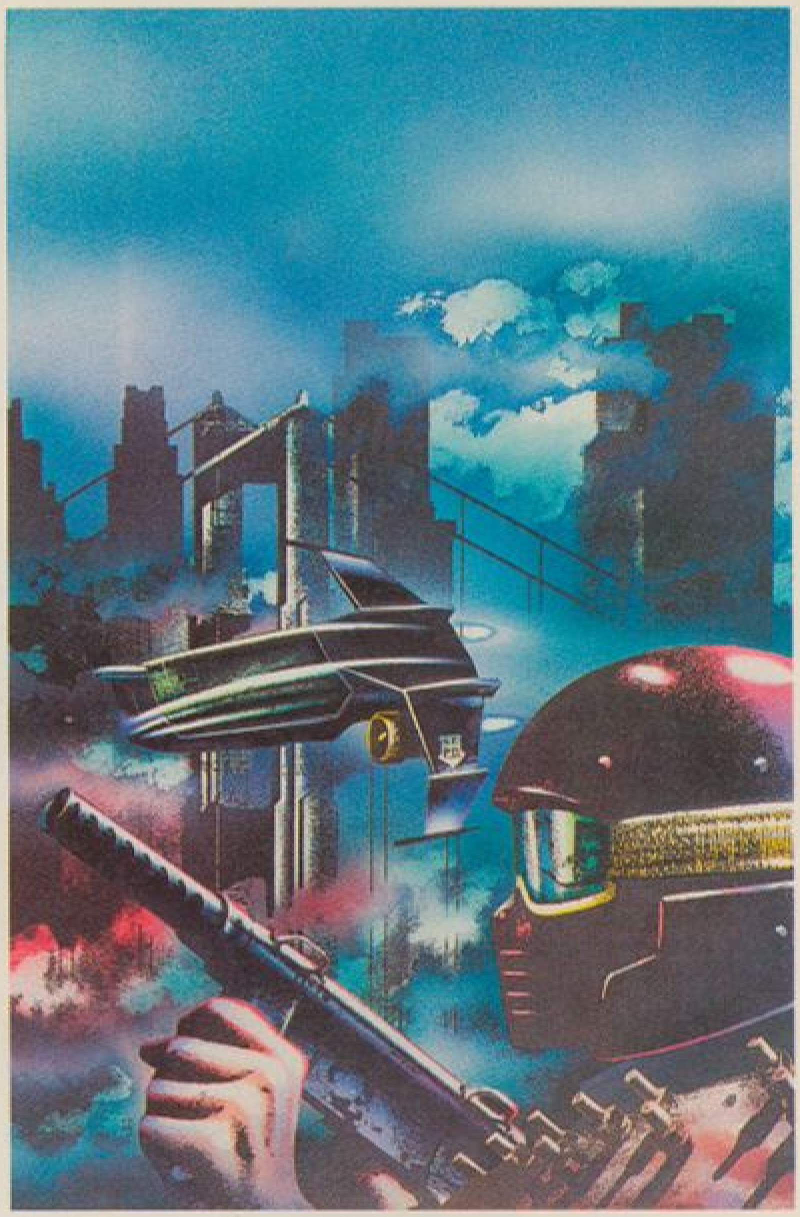
Mobo and Robo Bonanza, the ray-traced stars of Sega's Bonanza Bros coin-op, are soon to make an appearance on the Amiga and Atari ST courtesy of US Gold.

The Killing Cloud

Looking up at the polluted red skies hanging over the streets of San Francisco, you begin to wonder whether you can master the 10 missions that come with the newly-finished PC adaption of *The Killing Cloud* from Vektor Grafix and Imageworks.

As a cop in the year 1997, your tough assignment is to bring in the Black Angels gang. After sussing out the details of your next mission and the felon currently under investigation, it's time to place your net traps somewhere in the metropolis and visit the armoury to equip your pursuit vehicle with a few rounds of explosive tipped ammunition and a reserve fuel tank.

Following complaints from human rights organisation Amnesty International, all harrowing interrogation scenes have been toned down but the programmers still push out an impressive display of 3D polygon graphics in-game. This version of *The Killing Cloud* supports the major graphics and sound cards for the PC. Have you got what it takes to be a cop of the future?



Toxic smog and an overtime ban are the least of your worries in *The Killing Cloud* for the Amiga, PC and Atari ST.

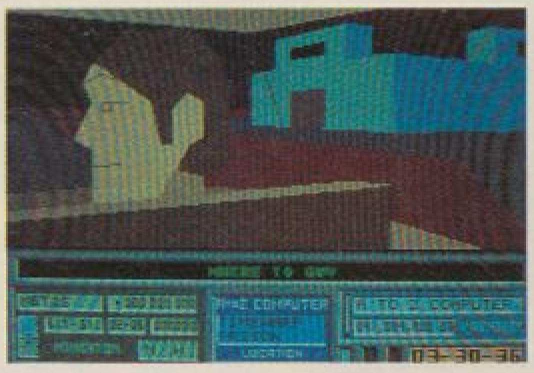
Crisis In The Kremlin

Following the recent headline-grabbing turmoil in the Soviet Union, Spectrum Holobyte couldn't have wished for a better backdrop to its forthcoming simulation of the Russian economic, political and social culture. Perhaps the top brass in Moscow should buy a copy?

Complete with 'multimedia animation', this geopolitical game challenges players to face one of the most debated topics of our time - how to pull the Soviet Union out of crisis and into the 21st century.

Vladimir Baculyn, who joined Spectrum Holobyte directly from the Soviet Union, is the lead programmer of the project. Baculyn has incorporated animated 'TV broadcasts' which continually update the player on events occurring throughout the USSR while inner-office memos report information from the KGB, Academy of Sciences and other top officials. Some require immediate attention and action, others could even be in the form of a joke.

With an accurate economic model of the Soviet Union, players are given the opportunity to initiate realistic policies, budgets and reforms. They can choose to be a hardline Stalinist and impose laws restricting civil rights and freedom of the press. What about anarchy? How would the Soviet society and economy react to ultimate freedom?



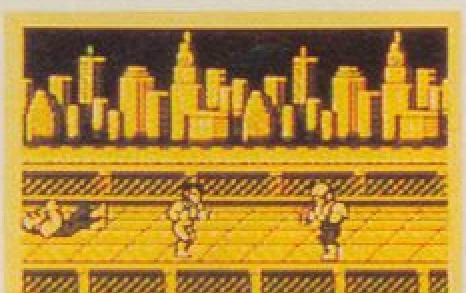
Players never die in *Mercenary*, they just lose their spaceships and end up going home in a taxi!

Mercenary III

Ever shy of publicity and self-promotion, programmer Paul Woakes of Encounter and Damocles fame, has suddenly unveiled a sequel to his first space epic.

Mercenary III from Novagen Software is a logical extension of Woakes' game style, with the added thrills of air combat to help the challenge last. The 3D 'virtual worlds' of the Dialis solar system are populated with new characters to befriend or blast.

Double Dragon II



***Double Dragon*'s phenomenal popularity has eventually sparked the production of a motion picture due to hit the big screen sometime next year. Meantime, grab yourself a copy of the Gameboy sequel and kick some butt!**

More punch-drunk martial arts mayhem is due to be injected into the Gameboy in Acclaim's adventure which features new moves, gameplay and graphics. Who would have thought the original low budget beat-'em-up arcade video game could spark so many sequels?

Framed by a jealous member of the Scorpions martial arts club, the game's hero Billy Lee is accused of eliminating a close friend. Defamed but not defeated, Billy and twin brother Jimmy journey across the urban 'asphalt jungle' to prove his innocence.

Through 13 levels of non-stop combat, Billy and Jimmy utilise their unique repertoire of punches, kicks and lunging high jumps to defeat the street-gang and Mohawk warriors.

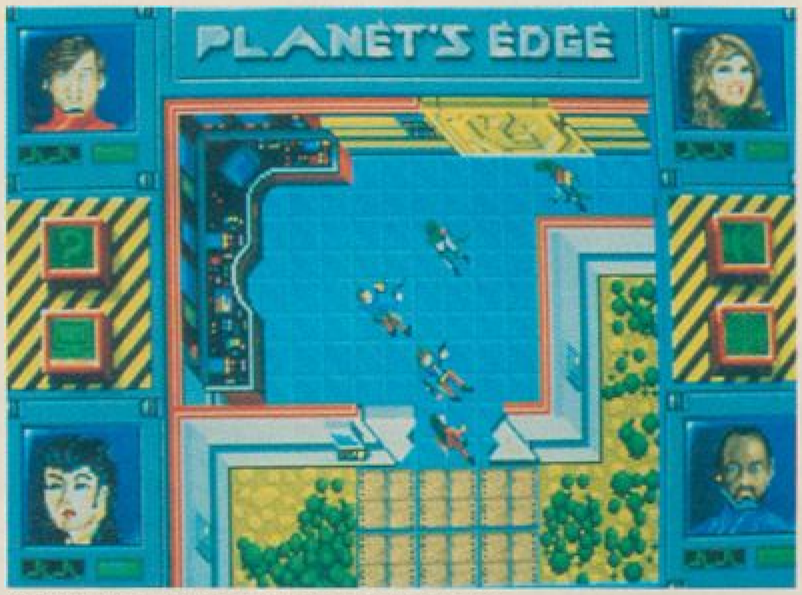
Planet's Edge

A diverse group of scientists, engineers, doctors, pilots and technicians are on a mission to rescue an Earth sucked into an interdimensional void. Then aliens suffering from an unknown source of radiation poisoning suddenly arrive on the scene. Will they glean information from the alien lab before another rip appears in the fabric of the universe?

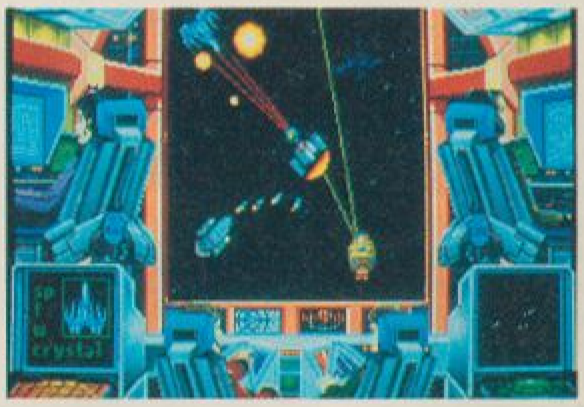
You must lead this group of space survivors in the hopes of somehow bringing the lost mother planet back into the physical universe. Nobody said it was going to be easy!

New World Computing and US Gold reveal that Planet's Edge contains over 60 uniquely designed worlds to discover and explore, story puzzles with more than one solution, and strategy-based space and ground combat. "A realtime option is included for those who prefer an arcade flavour of play," a spokesperson verifies.

After outfitting your party of characters with all the necessary suits, weapons and scientific devices, you can have a go at building your first interstellar kit car. From here you're able to custom design and construct dozens of spacecraft, starting with a bare hull and adding navigation, weapons and other useful items like go faster space stripes.



With over 60 uniquely designed worlds to discover, custom spacecraft and 'multimedia presentation' the sci-fi roleplay adventure could have reached the point of no return.



Guardian Angles

Some crazy companies will license anything that moves in the quest for a video game blockbuster! Nuvision Entertainment has looked towards the Guardian Angels vigilante force lording it over unruly subway systems for its new Megadrive game.

Players lead the crime bustin' rail warriors in a battle for right against overwhelming forces in the next century. They use their defensive devices and martial arts moves to round up criminals and clean up the streets.

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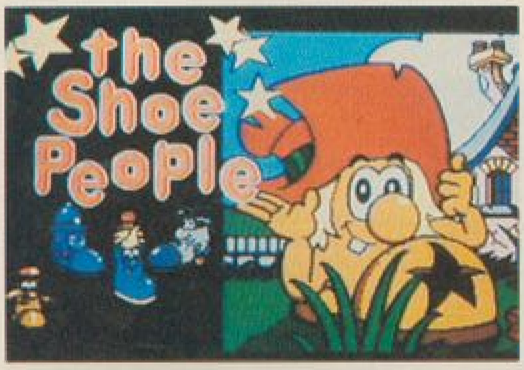


Shoe People

What's friendly, fun and educational? The answer, according to Gremlin, is a new early learning computer software label called First Class. *Shoe People* is the first release and is targeted at four to six year-olds. Based around the award-winning TV cartoon series, characters lead children through many important concepts so they can practise essential early learning skills at their own pace.

Following initial parental assistance, the games are designed so that children can play and learn on their own. Your Atari ST or Amiga could thus become a cheap alternative to renting those kiddie videos beloved by our lovable little brats.

There are six activities in all. Trampy Visits His Friends allows the silicon student to match colours, objects, shapes, letters and words while Charlie's Big Day is a game of event and sequence prediction. The Great Alphabet Robbery is an entertaining way to recognise letters and words, Wellington Goes to the Park is concerned with simple addition and number recognition, and the no-nonsense Sgt Major Sorts It Out teaches the classification of shapes, colours, size and patterns.

Margot's Magic Colouring Book is perhaps the longest lasting activity included with the Shoe People. This simple paint program lets the child have fun playing with colours, creating lines and shapes.

Each activity features colourful animation and exciting sound effects which reward the child for correct choices. It certainly makes a refreshing change from the domineering *Fun School*.

Might And Magic III

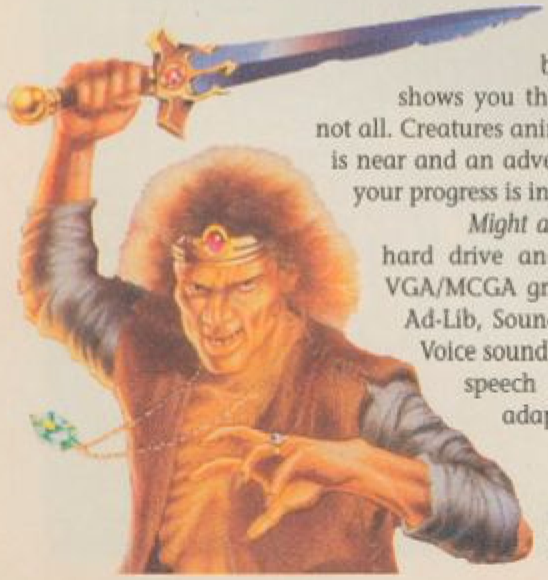
Explore the Isles of Terra and encounter 'thousands of powerfully illustrated inhabitants created by the industry's top animators' in the latest instalment of the popular role-playing series from New World Computing and US Gold.

"We've set out to make *Might and Magic III* easier to use, more fun to play and as visually and audibly compelling as possible," indicates author Jon Van Caneghem.

Players lead a party of hand-picked adventurers through dark dingy dungeons to lofty frozen mountain peaks as they seek to rendezvous with the legendary wizard Corak, a central character in the *M&M saga*. However, a spokesperson adds that former experience with previous games from New World Computing is not needed.

In case you are new to this intense genre of software, the built-in automatic help facility shows you the way when you're stuck. That's not all. Creatures animate when danger or opportunity is near and an adventurer's notepad to keep track of your progress is included in the packaging.

Might and Magic III for the PC requires a hard drive and is compatible with EGA and VGA/MCGA graphics cards. Gamesters with an Ad-Lib, Soundblaster, Roland or Tandy Three-Voice soundboards can hear music, sound FX, speech and screams during play. Other adaptions are under consideration.



Keep your eyes peeled for the eerie 'Jaws of Death' that smoother the whole screen when you lose a game.

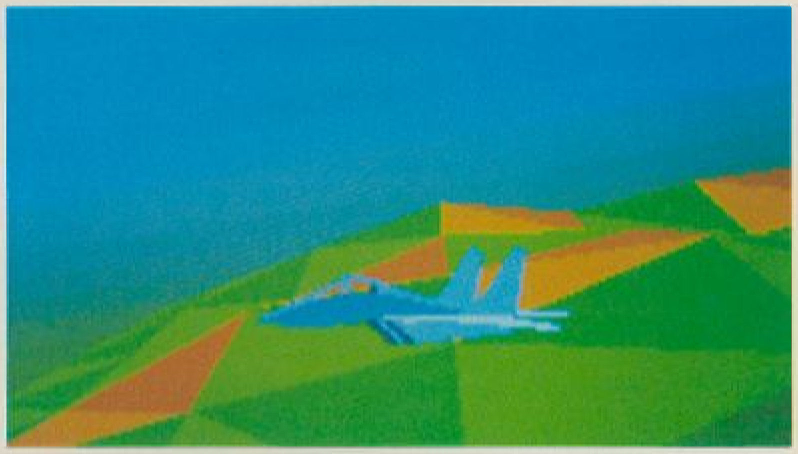
Super Space Invaders

Those little green monsters are back with a vengeance with this Kremlin conversion of the Taito coin-op for Domark. Things have moved on since the aliens first landed thirteen years ago so don't expect this to be an easy rerun of past triumphs.

Super Space Invaders **combines a host of features from arcade classics like** ***Phoenix, Gorf*** **and** ***Galaxians.*** **Waves of aliens swoop in from all angles, big boss sprites make a guest appearance at the end of each stage, and there are a multitude of multi-way scrolling playfields to keep your eyes dazzled. Oh, nearly forgot that wacky bovine bonus level and secret screens.**

The basic idea remains intact. Your job is to simply blow holes in the ranks of advancing alien invaders. ***Arkanoid*****-style power ups can be obtained by shooting the occasional mothership that makes a move across the top of the screen. These include a powerful Hyper Laser to sizzle the opposition and a facility which freezes the Invaders' return fire for a short amount of time.**

Small software house CCS is working on an extraordinary simulation based around the sixties South American guerrilla leader Che Guevara. *Guerrilla in Bolivia* is a strategy wargame inspired by the 1967 Bolivian civil war conducted by Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. Programmer Paolo Pobbiati apparently used Guevara's diaries for reference.



Super Fulcrum

Introducing the Soviet's most advanced fighter aircraft has been the daunting task for Simis, the simulation programming specialists behind Domark's previous MiG-inspired game.

Luckily, the guys were able to glean top secret information on the design and specification of the Super Fulcrum from their contacts in the trade. Before writing games, they use to code fully-fledged simulators for the likes of British Aerospace.

Funded by private money, the Super Fulcrum has supposedly been redesigned to include many futuristic features to create a lethal fighting machine. There's a new cockpit layout, enhanced head-up display and the aircraft now has the ability to carry a new range of missiles.

The follow-up MiG-29 flight sim centres around a large scale war campaign instead of flying a set number of missions. As a crack Soviet pilot, you're drafted in as part of a multi-national peace keeping force to secure the stability of your allies. Desktop pilots now have to counter AWACS spy planes, anti-aircraft tanks, SAM sites and helicopter gunships.

All the buildings, bridges, trains and tanks are produced in 3D polygon form and a clever hazy shading of the horizon creates a feeling of space and distance.

Domark reckons ***Super Fulcrum*** **will test every nerve and reflex like no other before.**

TECH NEWS

What the heck is stochastic modelling?
Rik Haynes doesn't know either...

Groove is in the Mouth

For all those radical young rappers out there on the mean streets of Europe, here comes the MC Hammer Rap Mike from Bustin' Productions in the States.

This groovy gadget comes as either a wireless microphone or monster loud speaker. The latter model incorporates a digital rap beat, scratch feature and flashing LED lights to 'turn you into an instant rapper'.

The hip staff on ACE are in full effect and hoping for a similar dance-o-matic device from Ice-T...

• Digital Rap Beat
• Flashing LED Lights
• Scratch Feature
• Turns You Into an Instant Rapper

U can't touch this MC Hammer Rap Mike from Bustin' Productions!

Stop Press!

Amstrad Release 'All-in-one' PC

And about time too. Many gameplayers have been attracted to the PC's capabilities but bewildered range of add-ons and configurations available. Now Amstrad look set to revolutionise the PC games scene with the launch of the PC5286 Games Pack.

For £899 plus VAT, the buyer gets a 16MHz 286-based PC compatible with 1Mb of on-board memory, 1.44 Mb 3.5" floppy and a 40Mb fast-access hard drive. The machine also features enhanced VGA graphics. Also included are a 14" monitor, a keyboard, a PS/2-type mouse, DOS 3.3, an easy-to-use graphical interface, analogue joystick, a 100% Ad-Lib™ compatible soundcard with joystick port and two external speakers and three games: Links, F-15 Strike Eagle II and Prince of Persia.

Explaining the move, Malcolm Miller, Amstrad's sales and marketing director, states "For many years now Amstrad has been in both the home games computer arena and of course the IBM-compatible business PC market. We now see a massive opportunity in bringing these two worlds together."

Amstrad see the computer bridging several markets: student, gamesplayer and business - with no compromises. "For homes where only one computer is a possibility," continues Miller, "the PC5286 Games Pack should be the only computer needed by the family."

It's an exciting - and potentially highly lucrative - move by Amstrad. More news next issue.

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Japanese Software House in Games Designer Shortage Shocker!

AN ACE EXCLUSIVE FROM DOWNTOWN TOKYO

Philips is offering Amiga and ST players a unique opportunity to win a go on the Boeing 737 flight simulator when they buy a CM8833/II colour monitor and bundled copy of F19 Stealth Fighter by Microprose.

Leading Japanese games companies such as Nintendo, Sega and Konami are apparently suffering from a shortage of top quality programming talent to take care of new software for the Super Famicom, Megadrive and coin-operated arcade video games systems.

Without imaginative and well-trained people these software houses will no longer be able to publish the likes of Super Mario Bros, Sonic the Hedgehog and Castlevania!

To prevent the foreign competition from producing the best shoot-'em-ups and platform adventures, several schools and technical colleges have emerged in Japan over the past twelve months.

The Human Creative School (HCS) was one of the first of these enterprises to be established. It currently runs a two-year course on the art of games design and production. Apart from attending lectures and handling coursework, students are expected to produce at least one marketable software product during their stay at the HCS. Only the best candidates are courted by the organisers so competition is very fierce for the limited places available.

HCS' game creating curriculum will be joined by courses in New Media and Computer Graphics early next year. Meanwhile, Nintendo and the Dentsu Group recently started a special school on the outskirts of Tokyo to teach the tricks of the trade to a select number of budding games programmers.

The way things are going, Japanese education experts could be promoting a degree course in video games within the next three years.

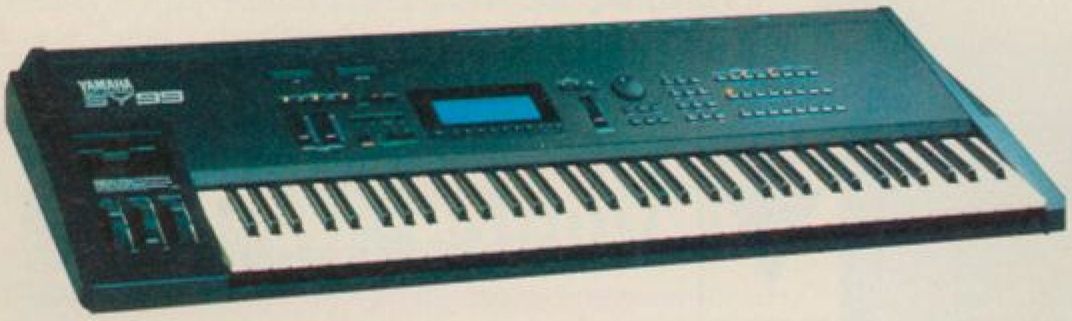
VR AND FRIES

That virtual reality arcade video game system from W Industries seems to be cropping up everywhere at the moment. Hungry visitors to the Rock Garden restaurant in London's chic Covent Garden piazza can don bulky helmets and do cyberspace combat in-between the first course and dessert.

While onlookers tuck into their up-market burgers and bottles of Sol, plucky players are batting it out in a game called Nightmare. More freaky frolics in freespace. This sci-fi shootout pumps out sophisticated three-dimensional computer generated graphics, quadraphonic sound and an element of the surreal.

Whatever next? VR in your local public loo, perhaps? What an utterly revolting concept. Are there any takers?

(Below) The 'sound of the nineties' is a product of the MIDI sequencers, multiple megabyte memories and frequency modulated sounds packed into the standard synthesizer sold today.



Slave to the Rhythm

Music synthesizers have come along way since the primitive decks of the '70s. With the demanding beats and samples of the average dance track, keyboard wizards are playing around with some sophisticated silicon these days.

Yamaha's SY99 synth is typical of the hardware heavy music machines currently on offer. Inside the familiar 76-key piano keyboard lurks an eight megabyte ROM with 267 preset sound waves, 512K RAM (expandable to three megabytes) that lets you download your own waveforms via MIDI to create stunning new voices, two high-performance digital signal processing systems providing a range of 63 effects with realtime control capability, and a built-in 3.5-inch floppy disk drive for storing voice, wave and sequence data.

If this is the sort of equipment you need to create that chart-buster, call Yahama-Kemble Music on (081 419 5419) for a free brochure pack.

Sharp Shooter

What do you do if you require special effects footage for your feature film but can't afford the talents of Industrial Light & Magic? Motioncam is the cost-effective Austrian answer to this tricky problem.

A 35mm camera suitable for aerial, ground and underwater shooting, Motioncam is possibly the smallest and lightest radio controlled action camera available.

Additionally, this super shooter contains a neat device which permits innovative camera movement in all directions. The carbon fibre camera housing has been shaped in the form of a tube, in which the camera body can be rotated 360° within the optical axis.

Further information on Motioncam can be obtained from its makers at Hietzinger Kai 169, A-1130 Vienna, Austria.

(Left) JVC's SC-F007 system boldly goes where no super VHS video camera has gone before... via the first tandem parachute jump to the North Pole.

(Right) Motioncam is probably the smallest radio-controlled action camera in the world.

Real Cool Camera

The icy exploits of the first tandem parachute jump at the North Pole and a solo climb up Mount Everest have been filmed by JVC's latest super VHS compact video camera.

After a successful demonstration on a warm sunny day in Moscow, the American developer of the Tandem Parachute System (which allows two people, one of which may have never jumped before, to safely descend under one parachute) was challenged by a skeptical Soviet General on whether this would work on the North Pole. Expert parachutist Norm Kent and a Japanese journalist took the challenge.

JVC's SC-F007 super VHS kit was chosen because of its small size, notable durability and tremendous versatility.

"Our system proved it could withstand the harsh weather elements and enabled the team to capture the excitement of the jump," claims Nancy Fleming at JVC Company of America, "No other video system has matched the reliability of the SC-F007 for such challenging and adventurous historical moments."

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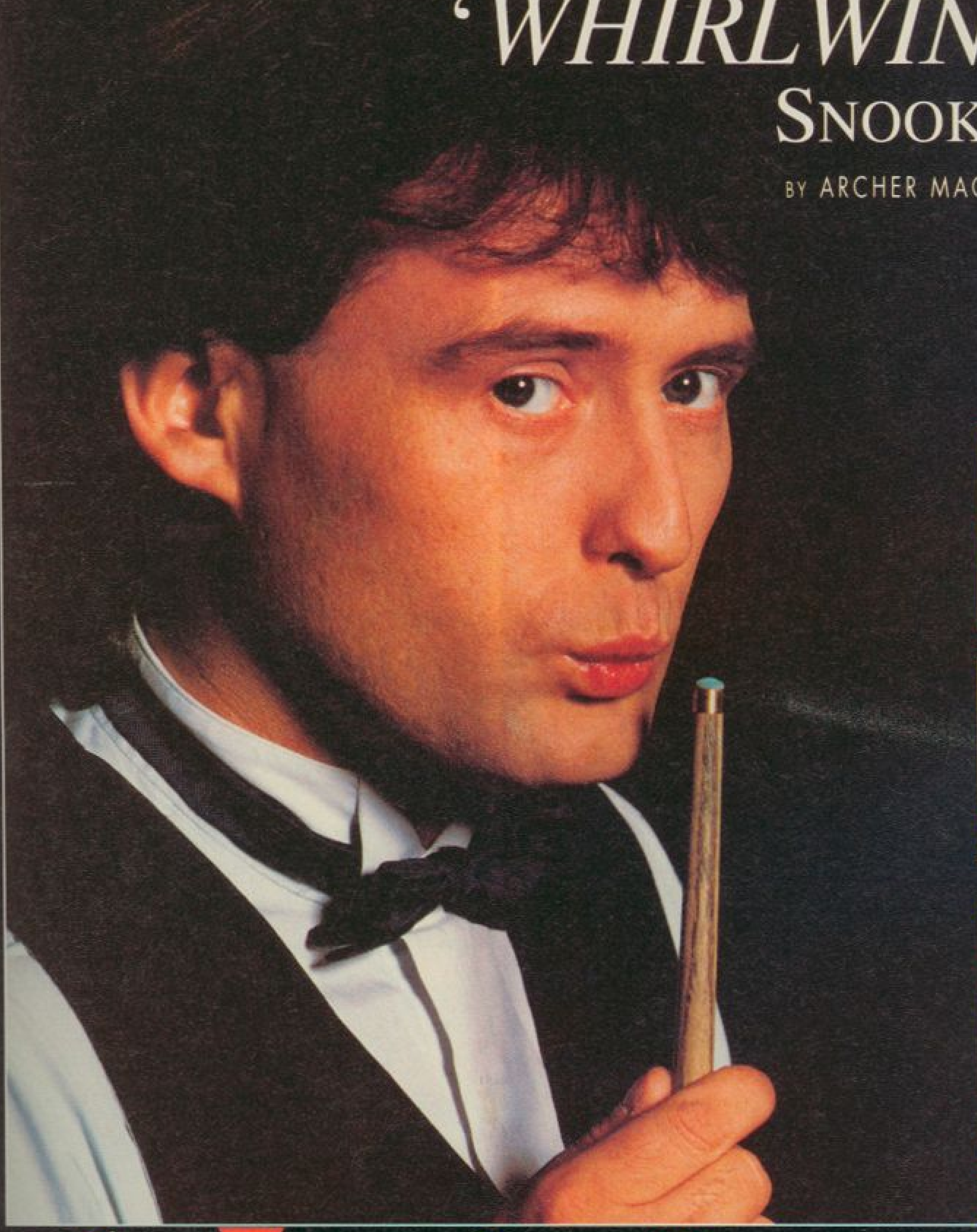
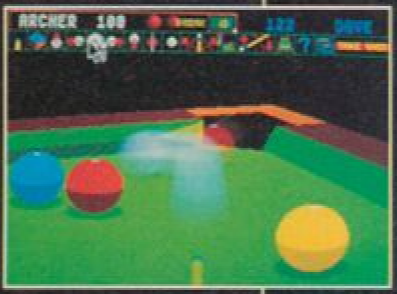
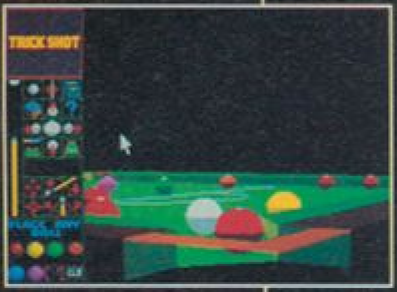
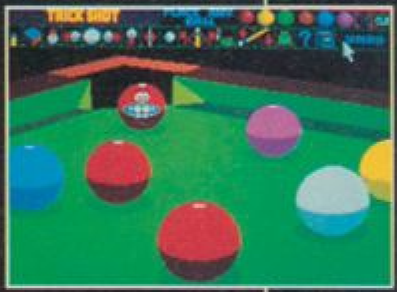
JIMMY WHITE'S
'WHIRLWIND'
SNOOKER

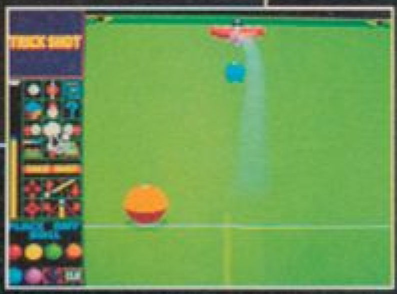
BY ARCHER MACLEAN

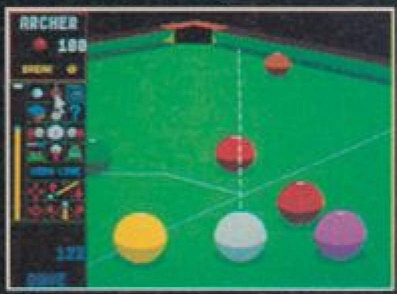












ACE 930	THE ONE - 95%	ZERO - 93%	C &VG - HIT	AMIGA POWER - 90%

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IS THE FASTEST, SMOOTHEST SNOOKER GAME EVER CREATED.

The only snooker game to achieve a maximum 147 break.
View the table from any angle.
Rotate and zoom in on any ball • Use swerve or spin, but chalk that cue!
4 skill levels • 1 or 2 player.
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Save games and highest breaks • Digitised applause and sound effects.

Virgin
GAMES

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Letters

NOW STEADY ON!

I am writing in response to the letter in Issue 48 from Mavis Nicholson. There must be hundreds of people in the same boat, myself included. However, this letter is being written from the other side of the counter.

Before I go on, I must state that I myself have encountered the kind of hassle that Ms Nicholson and others have met; this letter is not meant to cast doubt on the reality of the dodgy shop assistant.

This letter is more of a plea. I work in a certain high profile, High Street games centre which, along with RPG, board games etc, sells computer and console hardware and software. This letter is about the kind of hassles I encounter.

It has always seemed to me that a large proportion of customers switch off their brain before entering a shop; I wish they wouldn't. In the case of some shops, this leaves them vulnerable to counter-cowboys. In the case of the store I work at, it leaves us opens to silly questions at one end of the scale, open abuse at the other.

People have to realise that a shop, to be successful, puts all its stock out on the shelves; we don't hide stuff under the counter for our own gratification. This means that when we say "Sorry, we are out of that item at the moment", no amount of moaning or verbal insults will magic a copy of the game you seek into existence. All that will do is alienate the counter staff to your cause. Believe it or not, we want to help you. If you ask, we might be able to order it, or keep a copy for you when the game comes around again.

However, if the counter staff say that they cannot do something, it will be for a good reason, not because we have decide we don't like you. Often what we can and cannot do is defined by our bosses. Again, no amount of whining will change this.

A good example of the kind of inconsiderate customer I encounter is the "Giz a shot o' the Megadrive game, mister" type. This type usually wait until the shop is stuffed with people before they ask for (or in some cases demand) a shot. We are not actually supposed to let folk have a go, but if the shop is quiet and you want to see a particular game up and running because you may buy it or are having trouble deciding between two games, then ask, don't demand.

I could go on for hours. My workmates and I have been abused verbally both in person and over the phone by customers who, 98.9% of the time, do not have a leg to stand on. The funny thing is, the ones who have a genuine grievance are usually polite. We help them.

As a general guide, get the person behind the counter to check the contents of the disk/cassette box before you leave the shop. Flick through the manual to make sure that there are no blank pages.

Unless the shop is quiet, don't ask to test the game. If it turns out to be faulty, we will change the game; that is your right. Don't get offended if we test it to make sure it is faulty; we have to ensure that we are not being conned.

If you get two of the same game one birthday and want to change them, take in both copies. And please PLEASE keep your receipt! We cannot do anything without it. A receipt is your guarantee and proof of purchase.

If you have no instructions with a second hand or illegal copy of a game, don't come to us with no game or receipt and demand the instructions. We don't keep spares. We don't open home computer games and remove the instructions, ever. Console games, yes, but we always put the game and the instructions in the box when you buy the game.

If you remember that counter staff are human, if you are polite and have a genuine request or grievance, then we will help you. If you abuse us, then don't be surprised if we are in a hurry to help someone else. Of course, I can only speak for myself and my colleagues.

Name and address supplied

It's true that there are inconsiderate customers as well as shoddy shop staff, although the mail we have so far received on this subject would indicate that the majority of trouble is caused by lazy, unhelpful or just uninformed retailers. Of course they're not all bad, but judging by certain readers' tales of woe, the situation isn't exactly perfect either. Perhaps some kind of watchdog service is needed? Or how about a Michelin guide to good games shops, with marks for stock, atmosphere, service and so on? Anything that knocks the cowboys into shape can't be all bad.

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL

After reading your excellent feature on *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* in August issue, I felt I had to write to thank you for your help in making the film such a success in the UK. I must admit, I am very much looking forward to playing the computer game on my Amiga. Can you tell me if the game needs a Meg to run, as it looks very graphically intensive. I hope it doesn't, as I have only an unexpanded A500, and am a bit strapped for cash at the moment. Hopefully when my T2 royalties come through I will be able to upgrade to a 1500. I'd much rather have that than the ridiculous jet plane that Carolco tried to fob me off with. What bloody use is that? All it's done so far is sit on my lawn making marks in the grass.

By the way, I'm thinking of upgrading to a Super Famicom soon, and want to get some good games to go with it, but I'm a bit behind on the console scene, so could you tell me what the best games are? Also, how do you get past the second trial in *The Secret of Monkey Island*? I've tried everything, and Maria is starting to get a bit fed up with me punching the keyboard and shouting all the time.

By the way, I wholeheartedly agree with Mavis Nicholson's comments about shoddy retailers last month. I remember not too long ago I bought a game, but it wouldn't load, so I took it back to the shop, but just because I didn't have my receipt (I lost it when I threw the carrier bag away), they wouldn't replace it. I was so mad I bought the shop and closed it down. I tell you, no-one gives me a raw deal.

Anyway, keep up the good work - ACE is really great! So until next time, Hasta La Vista, Baby.

A. Schwarzenegger
Los Angeles
California USA

We've checked with Ocean and Terminator 2 *will, you'll be pleased to know, run on an unexpanded Amiga. You'll need to examine our back issues for the* Monkey Island *clues; we began a complete solution a couple of issues ago and it concludes this month. As for quality titles for your new Famicom, SuperMarioWorld is recommended without hesitation, as is* Final Fight *and* UN Squadron.

DAAAAAAA!

Congratulations on another excellent issue - try as I might, I just could not find the terrible screenshots and badly written reviews which Mr Serra complained about so much in September's Letter's page.

I am not denying that the PC and Amiga have glittering futures ahead of them; with the advent of multimedia, their role will probably be greater

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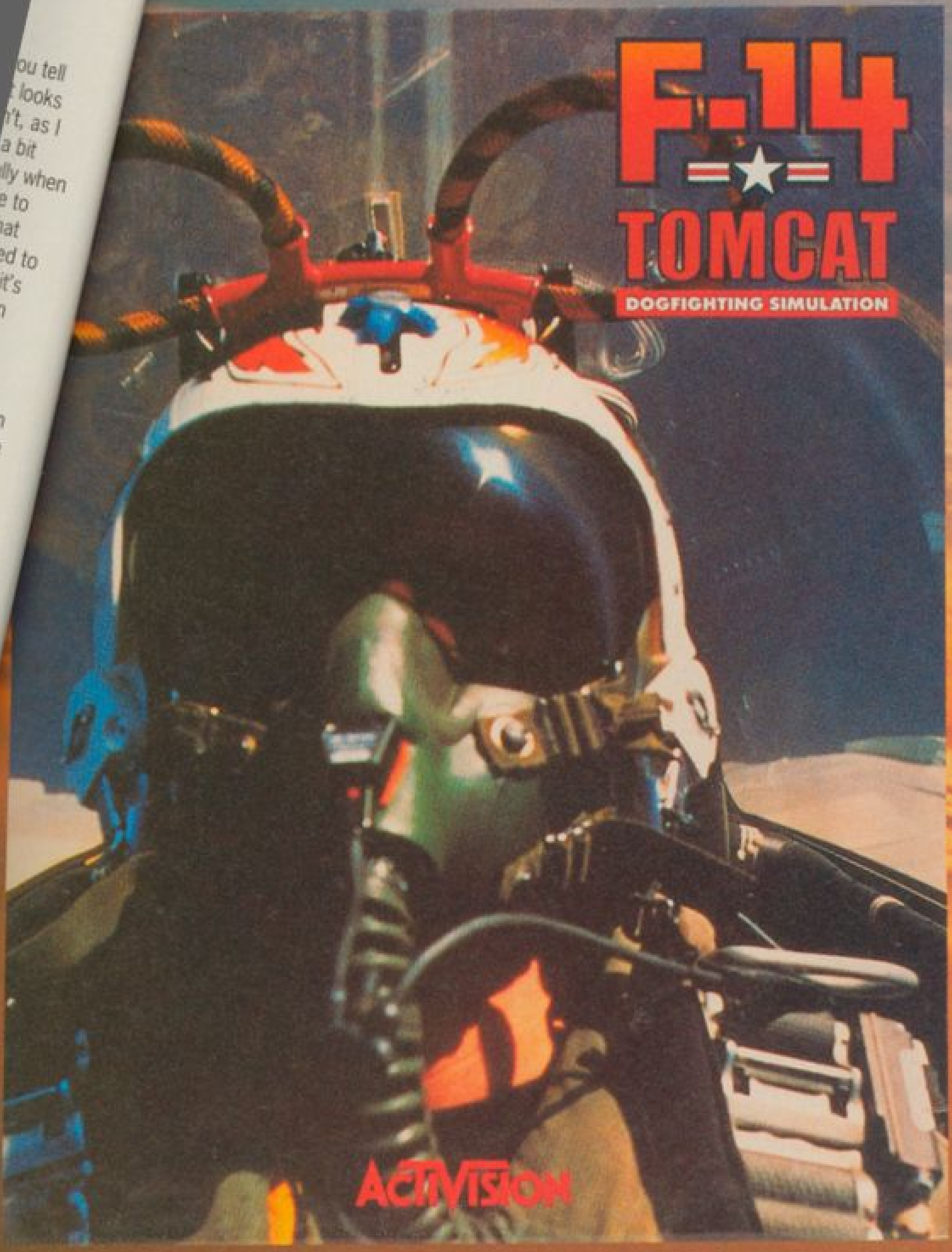
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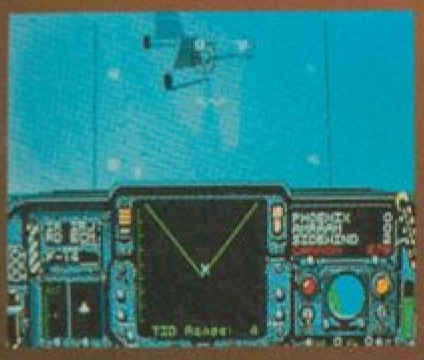
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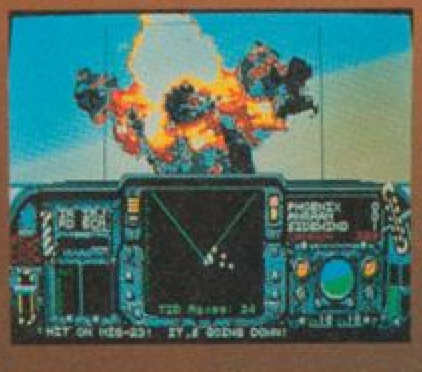
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HIT ON MIG-23! IT'S GOING DOWN!

Available in August on PC & Compatible Format.

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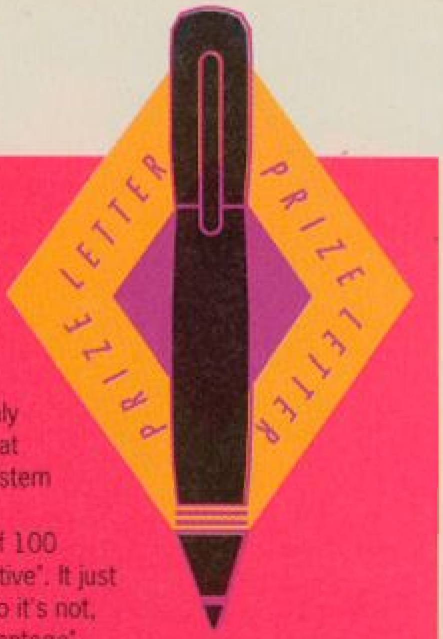


REVIEWS - ARE WE JOKING OR WHAT?

Are you taking the piss? What am I talking about? Your reviewing system, that's what. It's a bloody joke. I've only recently started buying ACE and I've already decided that yours is the wonkiest and most inaccurate reviewing system on the planet.

For a start, scoring everything out of 1,000 instead of 100 doesn't make your reviews in the slightest bit 'authoritative'. It just makes it harder to work out. And it's no good saying 'no it's not, because you just knock off the last figure to get a percentage', because that would rather defeat the whole point, wouldn't it?

And as for the PIC curve? They all look the same! They all start quite high, flatten out for a bit and then trail off. I mean, who *cares*? Don't you think people *know* that's the way all games hold the attention. It's hardly a revolutionary insight is it?

My other gripe with your reviewing system is that you score games in a wildly erratic manner, scoring virtually everything really highly (except for little foreign console companies who can't pull their adverts who get a right slagging) but then, whenever the mood takes you, select a top game which everyone knows is good and give it an especially rough ride just for the sake of it.

For example look at *Cybercon III*, *Brat*, and *Megatraveller*, three games which every other magazine raves about and yet you damn with faint praise. What's up, can't you stand to give credit where credit is due or are you have you got some sort of Time Out attitude and think it's trendy to dislike popular games & programmers?

I read most of the mags in the market (CU, C&VG and Amiga Action) and even C&VG which I think is a bit kiddy seems to give a more enthusiastic reception to games. You lot just never seem to be satisfied. You seem to be on the quest for some holy grail of game design. Some ideal title which we all know will never be produced. So why don't you stop being so bloody po-faced about everything and enjoy games for what they are, and leave the intellectual posturing to those better equipped?

Mark Wainright
Edinburgh

Good Lord! Get out of bed the wrong side, Markey-boy? Yes. Here at Pompous Towers we always like to be very sour about games and always amuse ourselves by marking down good titles. Sometimes we toss a coin to deciding whether we award a Trailblazer or slag off a game.

Seriously, we're only too happy if we don't concurr with other mags some of the time, simply because we like to think we do a better job of determining the quality of any given game.

And we make absolutely no apologies for encouraging further thought and greater attention to game design. You're right, nothing ever will be perfect, but is that any reason to shrug shoulders and accept whatever you're given as the best that can be achieved? I think not.

So far as the scoring and the PIC curve business goes, we're always open to new ideas, and if anyone would like to suggest improvements to our scores system, we'd be happy to consider them.

than ever before. However, it seems slightly (!) narrow to dismiss the entire console world as "all that rubbish", as Mr Serra did in his letter. With the arrival of games machines of ever increasing complexity and power - Turbografix 16, Megadrive and now the Super FamiCom - at relatively affordable prices the console industry has never looked more vibrant.

And not all the games available for these consoles are shoot 'em-ups or platform games (although this is indeed what these consoles excel at; witness the superlative playability of *Marioworld* or *Sonic*.) As a proud owner of one of Sega's 16-bit beauties I have found no trouble in finding long lasting carts of other genres - *Centurion, John Madden, Tetris* and *Phantasy Star 3* to name but a few. I'm afraid that dismissing the entire console world (Which is, after all, the fastest growing sector of the computer industry) out of hand seems infantile at best.

With a bit of luck we won't have to go through the "my computer is better than yours" routine all over again - it was boring enough the first time round. Consoles and computers have been peacefully co-existing for years now; it's bound to stay that way. Perhaps it's time for certain members of the public to find better things to do with their lives than writing deliberately confrontational letters to computer magazines...! Here's hoping.

Andrew Austin
Guildford
Surrey

AND YET ANOTHER THING!

Having just read the letter entitled "And Another Thing!" in issue 48 I felt I should voice my opinion on the matter. Mr Serra states that consoles are not the way forward, but the PC and Amiga. I feel he is right, but at the same time, wrong. Computers may be the way forward for games and not consoles,why? Because they have a KEYBOARD. I am not saying that this improves game playing, but it improves sales. Parents whose child is longing for something to play video games will rarely buy a games console in the hope that if a computer is bought it will be used for educational use too. This is very naive seeing as the computer will be used 99% of the time for games anyway, wasting a lot of its potential.

I own an Amiga and am extremely happy that I chose it over the Megadrive, but only because I wish to use it for art (with the superb *Deluxe Paint 3*) and for writing various things (such as this). Basically what I am trying to say is that justice is not being done to such wonderful machines as the Megadrive and Super FamiCom because they are consoles. This is a great pity. Hopefully one day parents will realise the mistake they are making.

Robert Skilling
Ightham
Kent

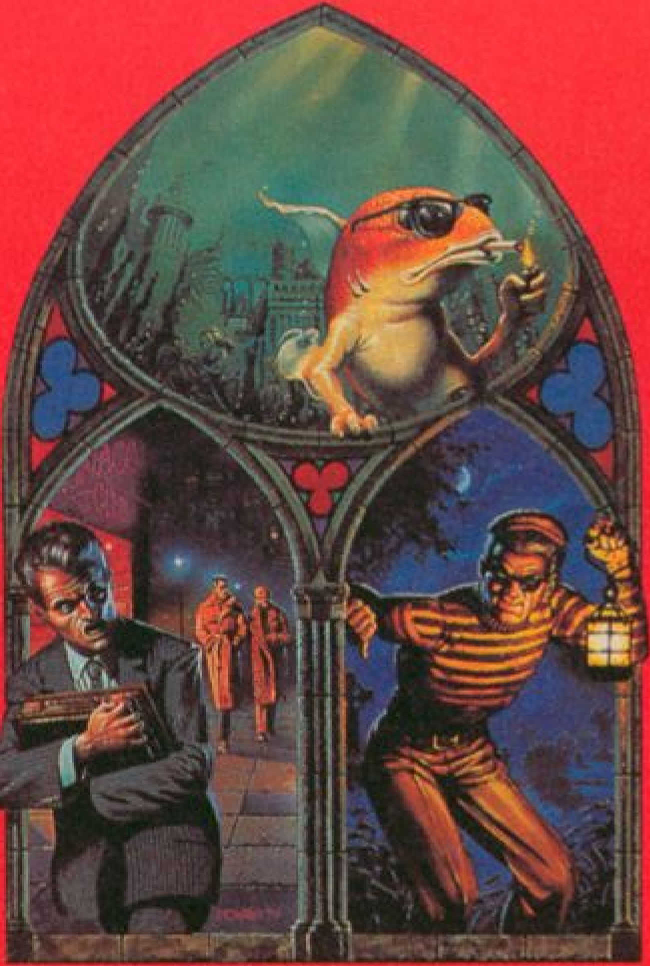
Don't underestimate the power of parents. The days of being able to fool mum and dad into laying out the cash for that Amiga because "it will help me with my homework" are long gone - they went out with the BBC Micro. Anyway, a lot of parents are quite happy just to buy their kids a games machine, and if little Johnny wants a Megadrive, who's going to argue when it costs half the price of an Amiga? Anyway, consoles are becoming so cheap now that many kids can afford to buy them out of their own pockets - keyboards or not.

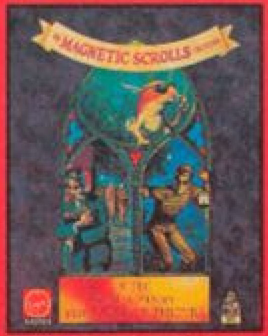
WHO THE HELL DO WE THINK WE ARE?

Oh, come on! Yes, you know what I'm talking about. Over the last six months you computer magazines have been busting your guts trying to copy the style of grown-up magazines like *Q*, *Empire* and *Premiere*. Not only are the magazines starting to emulate the design style of these magazines in an effort to look street and cool, even the writing is starting to get all poncy and clever-clever!

We all know who the culprits are. ACE is of course guilty of this henious crime, as anyone who has read *Empire* or *Premiere* recently will know only too well. But by far the worst and most blatant offender is Future's new *Amiga Power* publication, the so called "magazine with attitude (pah!), which since its launch has stolen just about every idea going! The way that they

IBM PC VGA SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN
IMMACULATE





THREE INTO ONE WILL GO!

THE MAGNETIC SCROLLS COLLECTION (VOL. 1)

Three Magnetic Scrolls' hits in one package - now enhanced to run under WONDERLAND's Magnetic Windows game environment.

FISH! - The Seven Deadly Fins, an inter-dimensional group of anarchists, are on the lose. 'THE PROJECT' has been sabotaged ... can you, a mere goldfish, save the day? FISH is full of what you least expect, lacking in all that's rational and devoid of all good sense.

CORRUPTION - Outwardly you're on the fast track to success in the City. But what corruption lurks menacingly just beneath the glittering facade?
CORRUPTION is a racy thriller where the only person you can trust is yourself.

THE GUILD OF THIEVES - How sneaky can you get? The answer is 'VERY' to stand an earthly of qualifying for entry into the famed Guild of Thieves.
In THE GUILD OF THIEVES treasure abounds, but can you find and steal it all?

Available on

IBM PC (VGA, MCGA, Tandy, EGA)	**£34.95**
Amiga (1 megabyte only)	**£29.99**
Atari ST (1 megabyte only)	**£29.99**

IBM PC VGA SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN

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CONCEPTS

pander and kiss up to the software houses and development teams so blatantly is appaling. Speaking as an ex-journalist, I know that it is important to keep on good terms with the people you deal with, but Power is stretching the point a bit!

Do they really think that the kids are interested in reading articles about how good-looking Ian Stewart is (kiss kiss), or having Core Design's Jeremy Smith (smooch slurp yum) on the cover?

And what about those ripped-off articles? The so-called Ultimate Autumn Preview is just a carbon copy of the Summer Movie Preview that *Premiere* does. It was written in a distressingly similar fashion, and even some of the categories were the same! And that "Peter Molyneux what have you started" thing was just a combination of kiss-up editorial and a rip-off of the *Q* "Who the hell does such-and-such think he his" design style! What's wrong with you people, can't you have original ideas of their own?

Personally, I don't think this whole "programmers as pop-stars" thing holds any water at all. In fact the whole thing really sticks in my craw. It's not like the music industry, where you hear the performer on the record, or the movies, where the stars are up their on the screen. With games all you see is the end product, so who the hell cares what flavour jelly Eric Matthews likes best? Games-X is also a cardinal offender, making the ridiculous assumption that kids want to put posters of acne-ridden programmers up on their wall! What medication are these guys on??!

So come on ACE and everyone else. Get your act together, eh? After all, you don't see *Q* and *Premiere* doing tips for *Gods*, do you?

Derek Evans
Hornchurch

Oops, bit of a fair cop, we suppose. Yes, we do use similar ideas from time to time, but only if they can be relevantly applied to this industry (such as the Power Extreme chart or this month's Gory Games feature). And while we agree that readers could probably do alright without having to listen to software MDs spouting their company bull, information on the people who actually do the games - the developers - is relevant. Anyway, what do other readers think about this? Your opinions would be appreciated.

SHOWDOWN

So, what's the deal? One week I buy a copy of ACE magazine with a two-page colour feature going on and on about how great the ECES Show is going to be, and the next week I buy a copy of your sister magazine CU Amiga, carrying the very same pages but with a big "cancelled" notice stamped across it. Is this some kind of joke or what? Now, I came to the Show last year and despite having to queue up for nearly two hours, once I actually got into the hall I found the show to be an enjoyable and actually rather epic affair.

And for once I felt as if I could be proud to be a gamesplayer, and could hold my head up high as I walked home carrying my plastic Ocean bags instead of being made to feel like a social leper. Why? Because for once the games industry seemed to have a bit of credibility. Frank Bruno, Esther (well, yes, okay) the Turtles, Mario. All of these people were perfectly acceptable to the public and were associating themselves with the show.

Surely the industry must have received a major boost in terms of the coverage that these celebrities attracted.

But now it's not going to happen? What about all the TV and Radio coverage we were promised? What about all the poor bleeders who bought advanced tickets? And what about the Industry itself. Aren't the software companies angry about not being able to deal with their audience; the public, or are they happy to simply shut out the paying customers so they can sit in their expensive hospitality suites?

Please tell us what's going on and, more importantly, why?!

Darren Newall
Highgate

Okay here's the deal. The consumer side of the show has been cancelled, which basically means no public admittance. And the reason for this is that Emap Exhibitions (a division of the publishers of ACE) were unable to get enough signiatures of exhibitors in time to continue with the show. While lots of software companies were saying "oh, yes" few were actually signing.

Now, depending on how you view this, you could either decide that what with this being a recession, it is important for softcos to save their cash (going to shows and building stands etc is very expensive) or that it was a stupid and blinkered and short term attitude denying themselves access to the very people that keep them in jobs; ie; the customers and therefore scuppering themselves for next year and throwing away all the good that was done image-building last year.

Exhibitions could have continued with the show and still sold public tickets, but it would have been unfair to take the public's money and then deliver a disappointing event with only a few exhibitors.

So all we can do is say we're as sorry as you and we hope people get their brains together by next year.

GOOD LOOKING BUT SUPERFICIAL

Why do so many people rate games by what the graphics are like? What about the game play? For example, look at *Mario* on the Nintendo. The graphics aren't brilliant but the game play is fantastic. This also happens with computers, the Spectrum has the worst graphics of all the main computers but the the game play makes up for it.

I think people should stop rating the games & computers by what's on the outside and look on the inside.

Peter Haynes
Derbyshire

Wise words, Peter. Games, like people, are so very very often not what they appear. And we're pleased to say that we believe exactly in your attitude, and we're continually trying to put across those very points in our reviews. And if you needed any more confirmation of the fact, why not take a look at our Next Month feature on page 32. You may be in for a pleasant surprise.

AGE CONCERN

I'm worried. As a parent and keen gamer, I've always enjoyed sharing the fun of computer games with my young son. There's nothing I enjoy more of an evening than sitting down and playing a good old fashioned adventure game, you know, applying some of the little grey cells in pursuit of rest and relaxation. But recently I've grown increasingly worried by the spread of consoles and, more importantly, arcade games.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not one of the chaps who write into the mag trying to tell you fellows your own business, but I just wonder if all this coverage of console games isn't encouraging less use of the thought processes which God gave us and more mindless button stabbing.

So you, seeming to adopt a far more grown up approach to gaming than certain mags I could mention, are my final port of call before I give up all this gaming altogether and take up a hobby more easily aligned with my age - like gardening.

With cheaper and cheaper games machines coming into the shops, surely computers like the Amiga, ST and PC are going to find their market share erroded very quickly. The most worrying aspect is that since the cheaper machines are being bought by - and software support seems to cater for - much younger people, this age bracket will become the norm and people like me who aren't that interested in battling the Mighty Sword of Gonzo in Super-Smooth Scrolling Parallax will get left behind! I suppose all I want to do is remind the software producers that there's a market for us not-so-old grown ups too!

Nicholas West
London

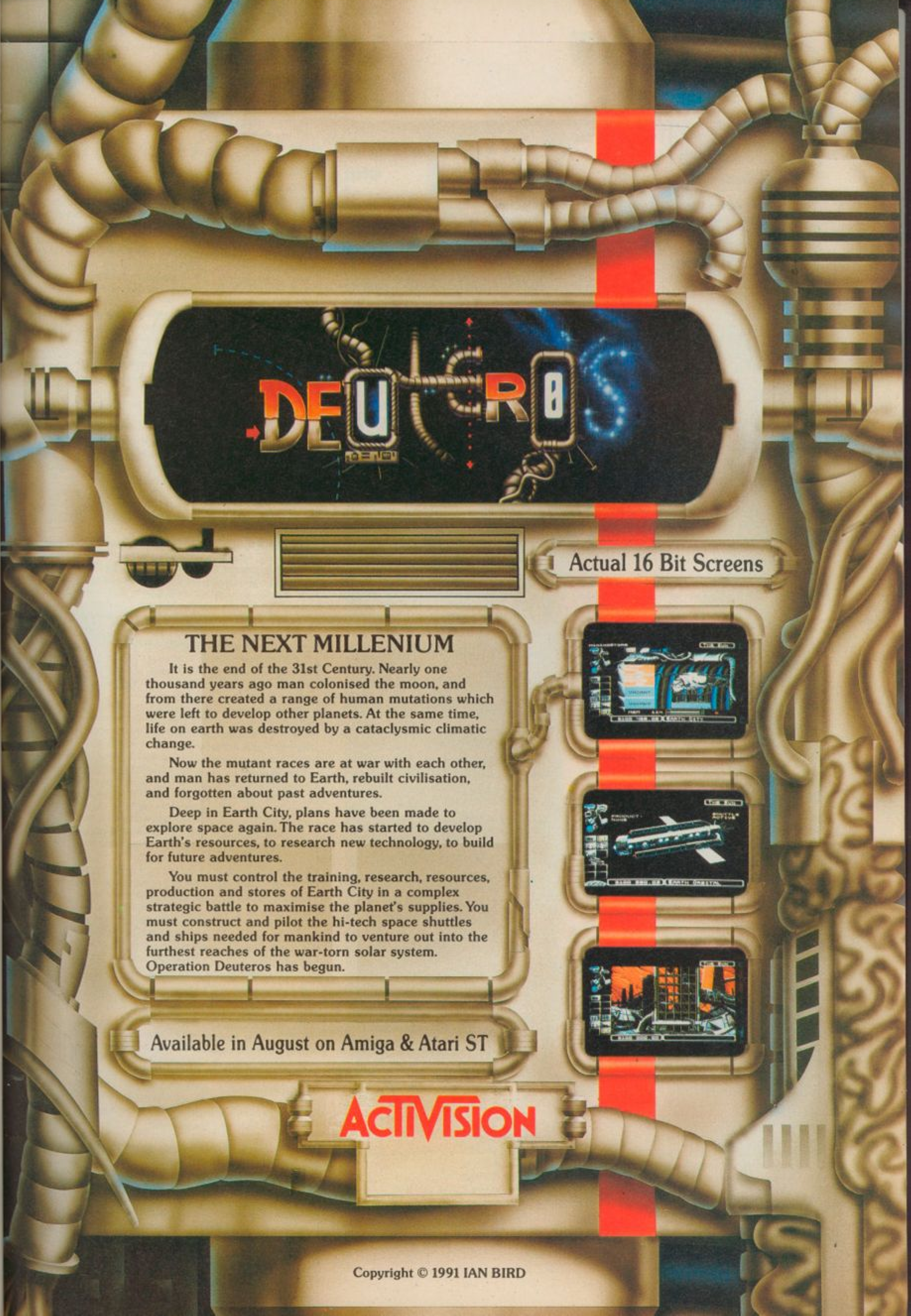
WIDE BOYS!

Following the recent re-release of several classic film titles (such as the Star Wars trilogy, Alien and Die Hard) on video in the new wide-screen format, I got to thinking: when are we going to see wide-screen computer games?

As I recall, this technique has already been used several times in the arcades, with games like Darius, The Ninja Warriors and Buggy Boy, which used multiple screens to provide a panoramic game area. In the home, the video-style "letterbox" format could create the same effect. So how about it, software companies?

Gavin Gainsborough
Gateshead

Sounds like a good idea to us! If anybody has suggestions for game types which would be appropriate for wide-screen, write and let us know!



THE NEXT MILLENIUM

It is the end of the 31st Century. Nearly one thousand years ago man colonised the moon, and from there created a range of human mutations which were left to develop other planets. At the same time, life on earth was destroyed by a cataclysmic climatic change.

Now the mutant races are at war with each other, and man has returned to Earth, rebuilt civilisation, and forgotten about past adventures.

Deep in Earth City, plans have been made to explore space again. The race has started to develop Earth's resources, to research new technology, to build for future adventures.

You must control the training, research, resources, production and stores of Earth City in a complex strategic battle to maximise the planet's supplies. You must construct and pilot the hi-tech space shuttles and ships needed for mankind to venture out into the furthest reaches of the war-torn solar system. Operation Deuteros has begun.

Available in August on Amiga & Atari ST

ACTIVISION

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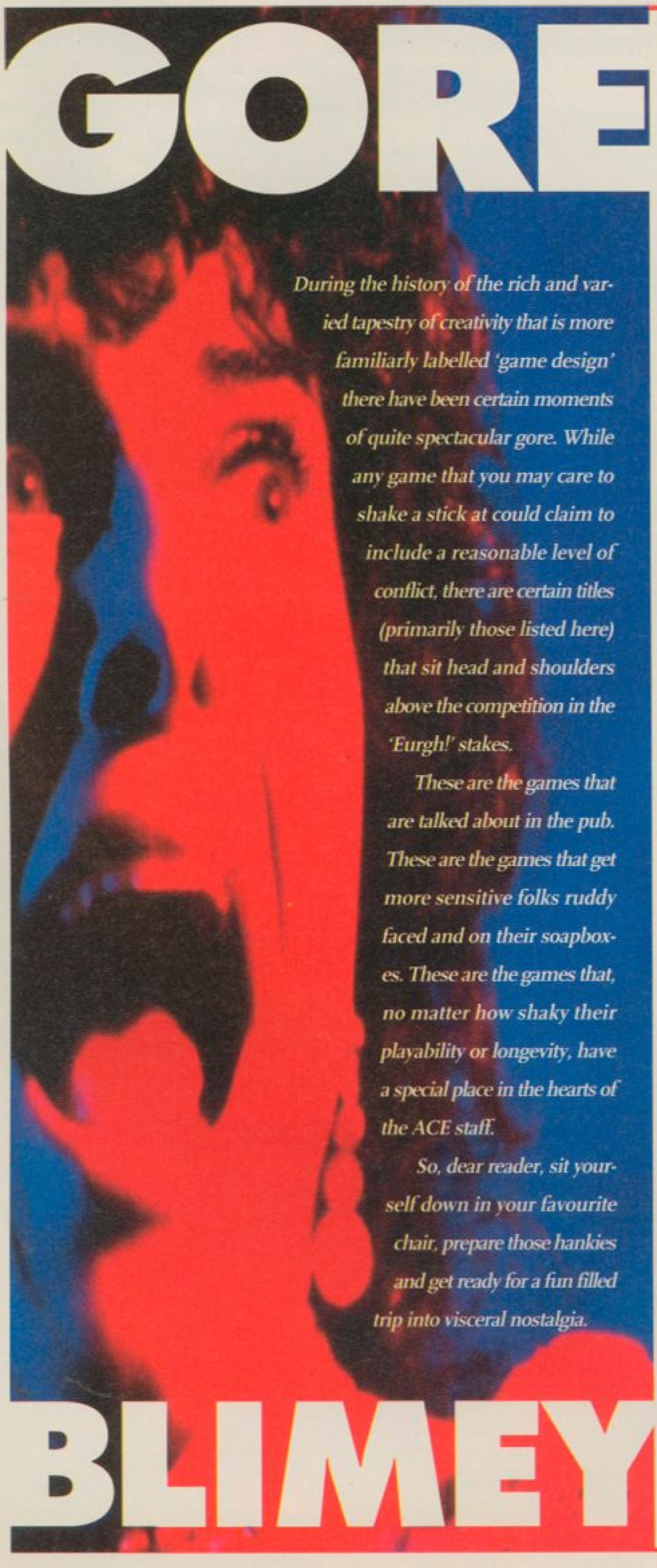

GORE BLIMEY

During the history of the rich and varied tapestry of creativity that is more familiarly labelled 'game design' there have been certain moments of quite spectacular gore. While any game that you may care to shake a stick at could claim to include a reasonable level of conflict, there are certain titles (primarily those listed here) that sit head and shoulders above the competition in the 'Eurgh!' stakes.

These are the games that are talked about in the pub. These are the games that get more sensitive folks ruddy faced and on their soapboxes. These are the games that, no matter how shaky their playability or longevity, have a special place in the hearts of the ACE staff.

So, dear reader, sit yourself down in your favourite chair, prepare those hankies and get ready for a fun filled trip into visceral nostalgia.

GAME	SCENARIO
PERSIAN GULF INFERNO (1988)	Fanatical terrorists have hijacked an oil rig in the Persian gulf, taking everyone on board hostage and are threatening to blow up the whole caboodle with an atomic device unless their demands are met. Enter you, who must take on the muslim madmen in this platform-based shoot-'em-up cum arcade adventure.
LEMMINGS Psygnosis (1990)	Fluffy emerald-haired sausages wander aimlessly around under the user's limited command. The plan is to lead a specified percentage of lemmings around their dangerous environment and through the exit.
OIDS FTL (1989)	Little men imprisoned on a selection of hazardously cavernous alien worlds must be rescued by the player who pilots an Asteroids style ship with rotational controls, rockets, smart bombs and jet thrusters. Destroy the prisons! Land on the pads! Collect the men!
BARBARIAN Palace (1987)	Beautiful but slightly porky Princess Maria Whittaker (for it is she) has been kidnapped by the moustache-twiddling wizard Drax, and only you, in a body that makes Conan look like Pee Wee Herman, can save her. Grab your sword and slash your way, one at a time, through Drax's beefcake bouncers.
TECHNOCOP Gremlin (1989)	He's a cop from the future. Cross him and you're history. You play Technocop, lone law enforcer in the crime-ridden 21st century. An army of drug-crazed crimelords known as DOA are causing all sorts of trouble over the city, and you have to race there (in a Chase HQ type section), then blow the hell out of the punks in a horizontally-scrolling shoot'em-up bit. Low quality bloodfest with a few redeeming features.
INDIANAPOLIS 500 Electronic Arts (1990)	Heroic racing drivers do battle around the famous Indianapolis circuit, entertaining packed crowds (or not, if you've got the detail level turned down) in a life and death quest to satisfy their need, if you 'must', for speed.
NARC Williams (Arcade 1990)	Special Drug Enforcement Administration hardmen HitMan and Max Force must fight their way through the streets to bring down Mr Big and his crack-dealing organisation. Along the way they utilise every high-power killing tool they can lay their hands on.
WARZONE Core Design (1991)	Core give the kiss-of-life to the Commando-style shoot-'em-up. Yomp up the screen, fellow psychopath in tow, a-shooting and a-slaying all and sundry with the huge variety of power-ups on offer.

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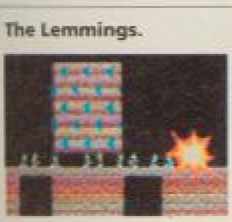
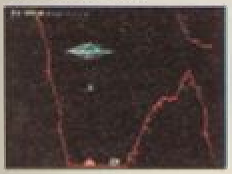
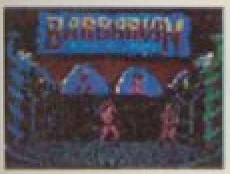
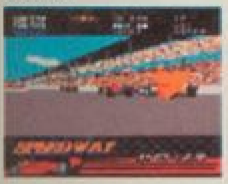
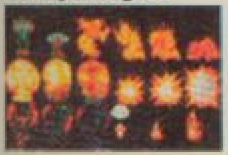
WHO GETS IT	THE MOMENT	THE WEAPONS	DO IT AT HOME!	GORE FACTOR
The terrorists - and you, if you get shot too many times through your body armour.	Whenever you shoot a terrorist. The action in Persian Gulf Inferno is realistic - bullets hit their targets as soon as the weapon is fired, and the victim's innards are sprayed unceremoniously over the decor behind them as their body is blown backwards by the impact.	9mm automatic pistol, 12 gauge pump-action shotgun and an Uzi submachine gun.	No aiming required - just point in the right direction and fire. Reloading is automatic, although in a heated battle the time it takes to chamber another round could cost you your life.	GORE FACTOR: 9 The terrorists scream in their native tongue as they rush on screen, then scream again when their insides are introduced to daylight. Loads of blood and good recoil on the gun enhances the effect. Excellent shotgun sound too.
The Lemmings. 	Plenty of entertaining moments, but by far the most jaw-slackening is the multiple-stomping room when a whole stream of lemmings with an apparently clear route through to the exit encounter a row of previously invisible stomping pillars, crushing 70% of lemmings.	Big squashing feet-like pillars of marble.	Simply try and complete the level the first time you get to it.	GORE FACTOR: 6 Reasonably high on the ohmygod front if not actually very messy. Seeing the volume of lemmings axed by such a high percentage is pretty amusing, though.
The little men. 	Careless or intentionally wreckless use of thrusters can set the little men alight, igniting their little heads and causing them to run around for a brief time while gloriously burning down to nothing.	Rockets and smart bombs and thrusters.	Blow up one of the prisons and allow all the men to work along towards your parked spacecraft. Thrust away from the planet's surface and then drift along the line, incinerating the little bleeders as you go. Aaaaah!	GORE FACTOR: 7 Pleasing visuals as the little fellas flap around with their heads on fire. Not much entertainment on the sound front, unfortunately.
Whichever of the two fighters is unlucky enough to be in exactly the right place at exactly the right time. 	The Flying Neck Chop, where one of the combatants leaps into the air, twirls through 360 degrees and swings his sword round at neck height in the direction of his opponent. If it's timed right, the gleaming blade neatly slices the victim's head from his body as the decapitated corpse slumps to the ground. The green monster that drags away the body then kicks the head off the screen with a giggle.	Generally, everything from the forehead to the foot, although it's the sword that does the major damage.	There are no strict rules about when best to do the move, although it takes so long to execute fully. Push the joystick in the opposite direction to the one you're facing with the fire button held down, and let fly!	GORE FACTOR: 9 The decapitation itself couldn't be portrayed any more graphically, with blood squirting all over the shop. Sound enhances the experience, with a lovely 'swish' as the sword slices the head off, and a gruesome squelch as the severed loaf bounces across the screen like a football.
The DOA punks.	As Technocop strolls through the ghetto buildings, DOA punks attack, but they don't stand a chance. One shot from your .95 AutoMag tears the bad guy limb from limb, leaving a quivering pile of mashed organs and bits, which actually shiver and twitch as their life ebbs away.	.95 AutoMag pistol and, considerably less fun, an Spiderman-type Net thing that just ensnares the punks.	Just wait until a punk comes on screen and hit that fire button. BANG!	GORE FACTOR: 8 The highly gratuitous visuals are made marginally less alarming by the fact they have a comic edge to them. Some arterial spray would have improved matters no end, as opposed to the all-too-neat pile of organs you actually get. It's still pretty sick though, particularly the post-mortem twitching.
All the racing drivers and some of the crowd. 	Screaming around the long corner and into the start/finish straight, the race leader had the briefest glimpse of the pile-up ahead of him. Ploughing into the back of the cars at a good 200mph, his polygon rocket shattered all in its path, scattering debris over a huge radius.	Rapidly accellerating tin box.	Hang at the back of the pack and drift off into the pit lane to allow the race leaders to get up a lap's-worth of velocity. Then turn around and trundle out of the pit lane up towards the high banking as the leaders approach. Drive diagonally up towards the top of the banking and they'll be unable to avoid you.	GORE FACTOR: 8 Plentiful smashes and the bonus of an action replay with plenty of different camera options and a Save Crash option will keep you re-running those fave smashes into the early hours.
The bad guys. And a good job too.	When Hit and Max down a bad guy with their machine guns, the body is ripped to shreds by the red-hot dum-dum rounds. Bloodied limbs rotate as they fly through the air spectacularly. This is nothing, however, to the effect caused when you lay into a pile of the guys with a bonus rocket gun. Awesome!	Typically, a pistol-grip machine gun similar to the Heckler & Koch MP5 used by the terrorists in Die Hard, although the more powerful bazooka guns crop up fairly regularly.	Line up your victim and stab that fire button to turn drughead into ex-drughead. With the rocket gun, it's best to wait until you've got plenty of targets grouped closely together in order to achieve the maximum effect.	GORE FACTOR: 7 Very nasty indeed, increased by the fact that the weapons are so bloody hard. Not much in the way of sick sound, but there's more than enough to feast your eyes on.
Surprise, surprise, it's Johnny Foreigner. 	Okay, so you've just collected the flamethrower power-up. A tap of the fire button and a roaring stream of flame squirts out of your barrel, turning any enemy troopers into pillars of fire. The writhing bodies slowly fall to their knees and curl up in a hilariously authentic manner.	The flame thrower.	Shoot open any packing cases you find. As soon as you see the flamethower power-up, grab it. If you don't, you partner will, because it's by far the best weapon.	GORE FACTOR: 7 It's the animation that makes this a real nasty. The stricken bodies don't just go up in smoke, they perform realistic death throes. Who needs Backdraft with games like this?

YO!

GET READY!

BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE

xperience the [illegible]st gameshow [illegible] entire universe, [illegible] and better than ever [illegible] the European Computer Ent[illegible]ment Show [illegible] the only show dedicated to the [illegible] in games software and [illegible] from the [illegible] brand [illegible] Get down [illegible] live entertainment! Meet you[illegible] the celeb[illegible] Maybe even appear on TV [illegible] speak [illegible] radio! It's MEGA, MAN!

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THE EUROPEAN COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SHOW
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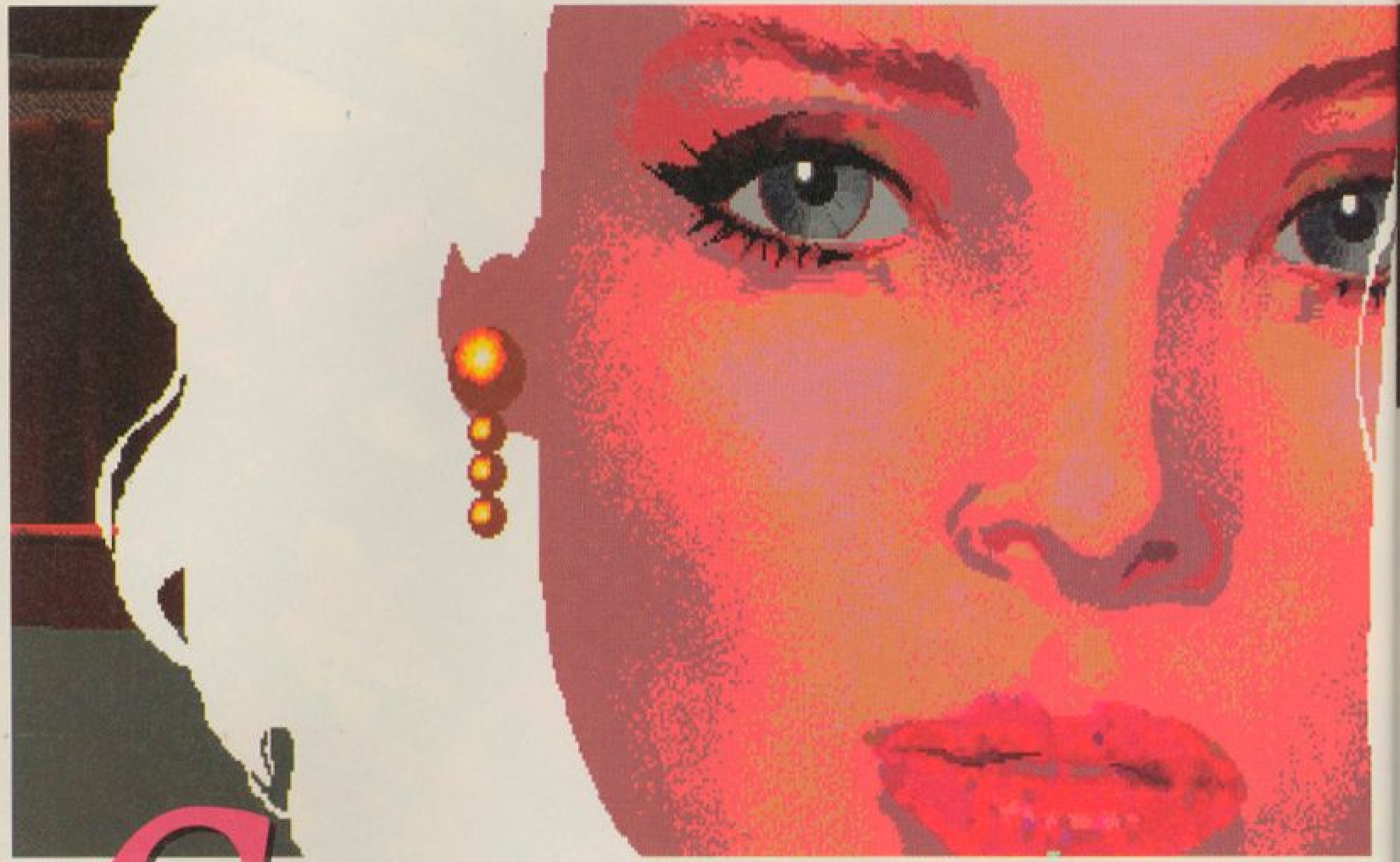
LAW!



SPACESHIP

Blade Runner in the comfort of your own home, thanks to the friendly Macintosh and some compact discs...

The Macintosh has always been sold as a 'friendlier' computer than the IBM PC but for some strange reason always lacked an abundance of interesting game software.

Spaceship Warlock by Mike Saenz - the creator of the first computer generated comic book 'Shatter' - goes some way to redress this intolerable balance in a uniquely Macintosh fashion. Sold as an interactive movie on CD-ROM, that's what it is - shot in Cinemascope no less. A trick which is used to get more images on the disk.

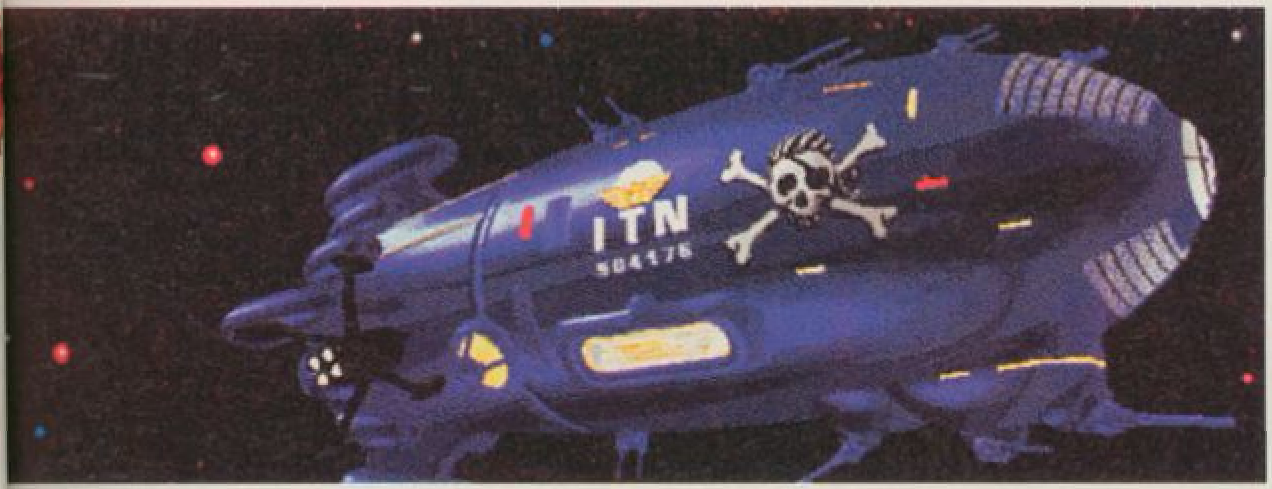
The basic story line is strictly that of a 1950's science fiction B - film. You end up penniless on an alien world trying to survive on the cold streets and ultimately get off the dirtball to more favourable climates. Once you've succeed you promptly get captured by The Spaceship Warlock to be taken on a quest of plundering the galaxy and battling the evil empire.

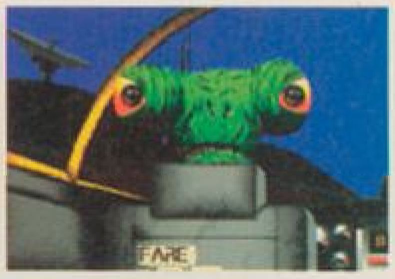
The levels of interactivity are very simple, key works can be used, and guns aimed and shot. But this is a film after all and using the term 'game' would put some pretty heavy requirements on it which it would fail miserably in passing.

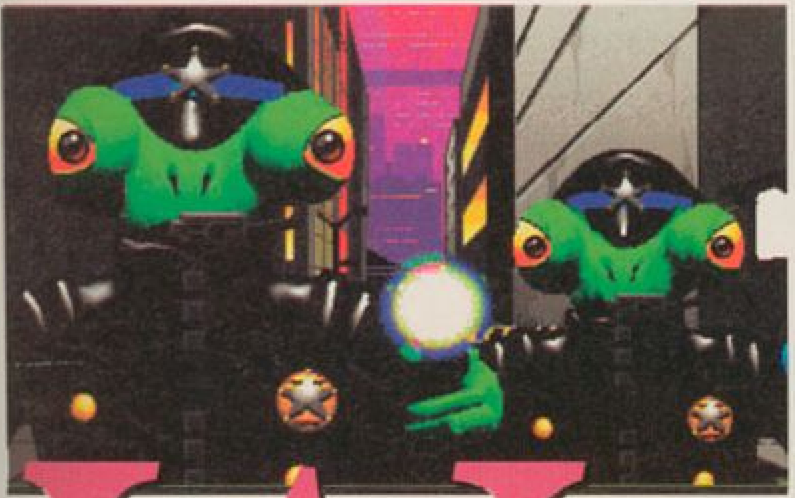
The film is set in the distant past when humans had conquered space and established the Terran Empire which ruled throughout the known galaxy. Unfortunately the humans weren't the only ones out there and they soon lost there grip when the giant warships of Kroll Empire 'darkened suns and destroyed worlds'. A long fevered war ensued and mankind lost to the Kroll empire. They also lost the Earth which was taken as hostage and moved to a secret solar system within Krollian space.

While the masses of humankind bowed to serve the evil empire a group of Space Pirates defied the Imperiam to strike back at their valued trade ships. Led by the legendary rebel commander Hammer, they challenged the empire and searched for their lost home world of Terra.

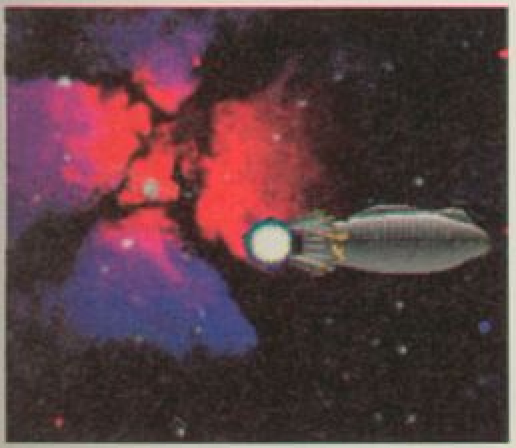
With all this history in mind you start in the inky depths of space with only one planet visible in the distance. The ambient music swells up in the background as you get closer with each click of the mouse button. Planetary specs appear bellow







WARLOCK



the wide angle screen. The city you arrive in must have been inspired by Blade Runner since it's 'look-feel' is identical, even the taxi cabs have antigravity units in place for wheels.

Posters on the alleyway walls warn of a dangerous criminal in the vicinity with large reward on its head if you manage to survive the encounter. At each intersection are large video screens with a robotic Kroll animatedly telling you to pay your taxes and stay in line. On the same poll is a Comlink, from there you can place vid calls, order information and purchase fax tickets if you have the credits.

The entire area you have arrived in has been cordoned off by trigger happy alien police in pursuit of the criminal. Finding a bar you try to order a drink, but being creditless you are kicked out before the holographic striptease show starts.

Your luck changes for the worse and you meet the wanted alien criminal who wants all your money. Fortunately aliens are a pushover to Macintosh owning humans and you render him unconscious by repeatedly clicking the mouse on his face. Stealing his credit card you also collect the reward for his capture. And so the adventure begins.

While Spaceship Warlock allows movement and interaction with the various characters, total freedom of movement is not allowed as in adventure games. Following the narrative of the film is important otherwise you end up in a dead end and have to start again from your last saved position. There are some side route diversions but the level of problem solving is minimal. Your mainly along for the ride.

The design of the CD-ROM is amazing, well conceived and meticulous in its design. It has superb Macintosh 8 bit colour graphics, atmospheric soundtrack, vivid sequences that can compare cinematically with Star Wars or Blade Runner. The program is however limited by its level of interactivity as well as being slowed down by the hardware (a Mac II with a CD-ROM drive with 380 milliseconds access time or faster is suggested) and software running it (Macro Mind Interactive).

Given a year as software and hardware catches up with the demands of Mike Saenz's company Reactor, we should start seeing some brilliant games for the Mac at long last - if you have fast enough hardware to run them.

HUN

ADAPT TO SURVIVSE

The Hunter is alone behind enemy lines. Wirsatilit options, and the expertise to complete us mis

His only accomplices are the weapons, wad str dimensional universe; his objective: to attacırvive.

You have destroyed a rocket launcher for 98 credits
You have entered a hangar
You have boarded a saboteur
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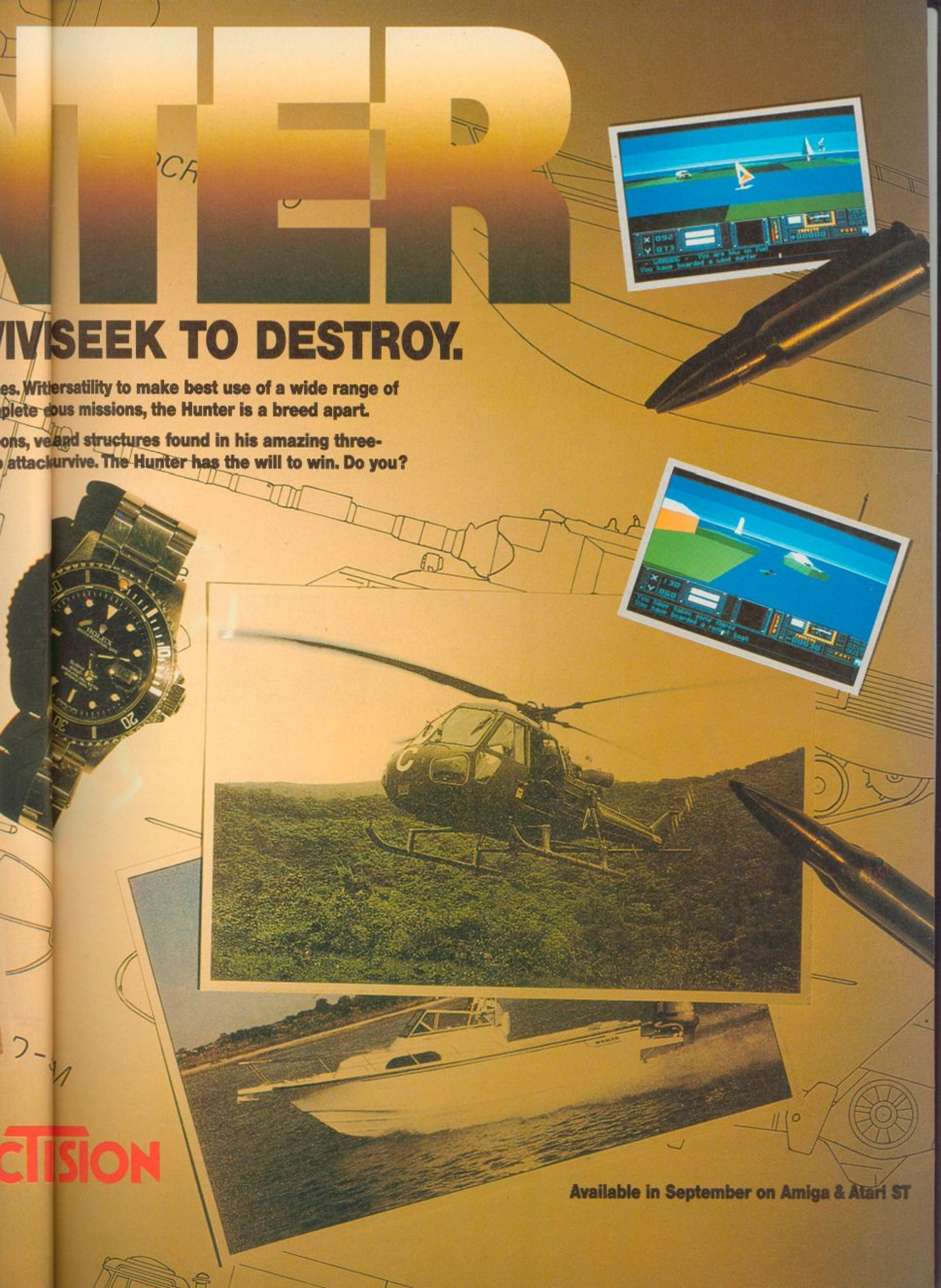

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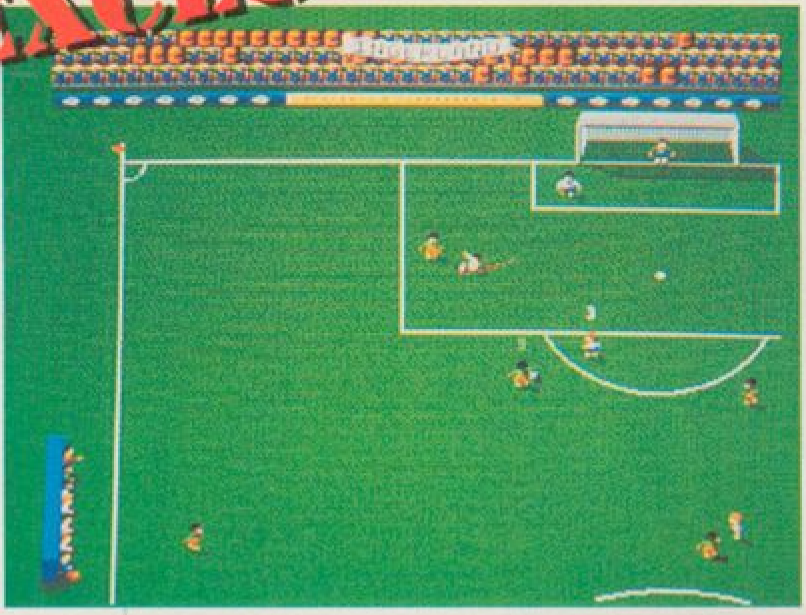
WARNING - You are low on fuel
You have boarded a land surfer

You have taken some flares
You have boarded a rocket boat

CTISION

Available in September on Amiga & Atari ST

EXCLUSIVE!



SensiSoccer in action. Note that the pitch is a lot smaller than its *Kick Off* counterpart, meaning that you'll always be able to see the goal, even from the centre line. Speedwise, it's hoped that things will run at around the same pace as *Kick Off*, but given the smaller size of the pitch, things may have to be slowed down a tad. This shot also shows the squad bench on the touchline, which can be brought into play whenever the game is stopped. The Manager is used to substitute players, while the trainer can be brought out with his magic sponge to tend to an injured player. "Using the trainer is a bit of a gamble," says Jon. "If he's over-cautious, he could take off a player who might be able to carry on. But if you don't bring him out, a player's injury could get even worse."

A SENSIBLE APPROACH TO SOCCER

The duo that revolutionised the 8-bit footy scene in 1988 is now preparing to challenge *Kick Off 2* for the 16-bit trophy. And they just might do it, too...

Well, if you're going to attempt the impossible, you might as well do it sensibly. The truth is, such is the fanatical following behind Anco's awesome *Kick Off 2*, that even to suggest that a better football game might be possible could well have you burned at the stake over a basket of live cats. People have tried, sure, but to date all the so-called *Kick Off*-beaters, including *Gazza II* and the fine *Manchester United Europe*, have been played right off the park by *KO2*'s incredible playability. There's just nothing to touch it.

Or is there?

Back in 1988, the long-haired duo of Jon 'Jovial Jops' Hare and Chris 'Cuddly Crix' Yates, collectively known as Sensible Software, took a break from their usual unusual shoot-'em ups (including *Wizball*, *Parallax* and the *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit*) and produced what was, quite simply, the best 8-bit football game ever. *MicroProse Soccer* went up against the lot, including the classics *International Soccer* and *Match Day*, and won hands down. Unfortunately, the out-of-house 16-bit versions that followed were poor beyond belief, but now the boys have got their thumbs stuck into the 16-bit pie with *International 3D Tennis*, this month's *Mega lo Mania* (see page 56) and the forthcoming *Wizkid*, they're hoping to do again what they did three years ago, with another soccer stunner.

"I've just finished playing *Kick Off 2*," says Jon, "and I've decided that there's a awful lot of stuff wrong with it. When you play the game you keep thinking that it would be so much better if certain things didn't happen and other things did. That, combined with the fact that we just like football games in general, is why we're doing *SensiSoccer*. We looked at *Kick Off 2* and *Speedball 2*, and I think *SensiSoccer* will be sort of a combination of the two."

SensiSoccer's radical approach consists basically of giving the computer much more control over the players. Because the program will handle most of the instinctive movements, the player will have more enhanced control over skills like shooting and passing. "Our way of thinking is that, because any decent football player knows how to run to the ball automatically, that's how it should be in a computer game," explains Jon. "It's really annoying in *Kick Off*, when you run to the ball and miss it, and then have to go back for it, by which time somebody else has got it. Being able to get to the ball is such an obvious thing that it's not something you should have to worry about. So in *SensiSoccer*, the nearest player to the ball will run to it under computer control, and hand over to the player when he's got it."

An added aspect to this technique is that players will be able to select what to do with the ball before they even get it. It will be possible to lock a movement in advance, so that when the player gets the ball, he automatically carries it out. Of course players can still dribble, but because less effort has to be expended on just keeping the ball at your feet, more complex skills are allowed for. "You'll be able to select, in any one joystick movement, to kick the ball in eight directions, at any height, and at any power," says Jon. While passes will be accurate, they won't work as in *Kick Off*, automatically finding their way to the nearest friendly player. There's no need to, because the nearest friendly player will always home in on it. As a further attempt to enhance control, *SensiSoccer* will be joypad compatible, as Jon is adamant that it allows for swifter and more efficient ball control than the conventional joystick.

Extra design aspects include the ability to give your player an extra burst of speed when needed, and a special new statistic called Form. It's effectively the reverse of all other statistics, as instead of the statistic affecting the player's ability, the player's ability affects the statistic. "It's just like in real life, where a player's form increases, depending on how well he's been playing," Jon explains. "The computer judges how well he's performed on the pitch, and adjusts his form rating accordingly. This will allow you to buy a cheap player on the transfer market, play some good games with him to get his form up and sell him back at a profit. Just like in real football, see?"

Jon is hoping to give *SensiSoccer* a "decent management game". As team boss, you'll get offers from other teams, and move from club to club, maybe even to manage foreign national teams with National Data Disks that are already being planned. Also, it's hoped that the teams and player names will be based on the genuine articles, with the facility to edit the data so soccer enthusiasts can keep their teams up to date. Data Disks will interact with one another so the manager of a national team will get to take his squad to the European and World Cups and so on. All this is to be combined with TV-style presentation and elaborate sound effects, including a bevvy of sampled speech and touches like drums and firecrackers when you play abroad.

While work on *SensiSoccer* is still in embryonic stage, it's already shaping up as the most likely contender to the *Kick Off* crown to date. If Jon and Chris can really put their ideas into action in time for its proposed release around Spring next year, maybe beating Anco's classic isn't such an impossible mission after all...

●Gary Whitta

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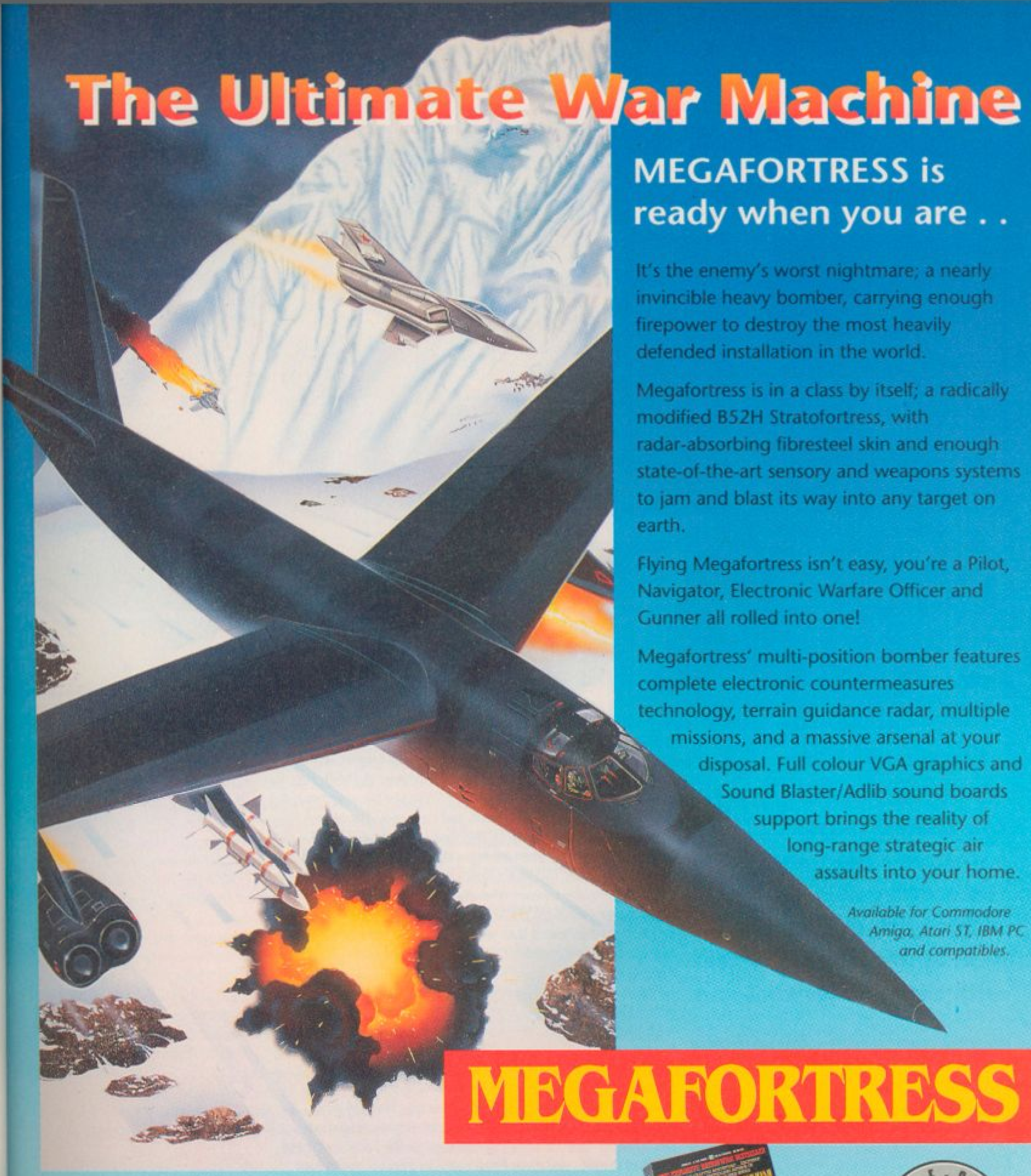

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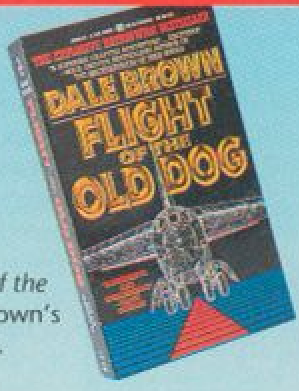

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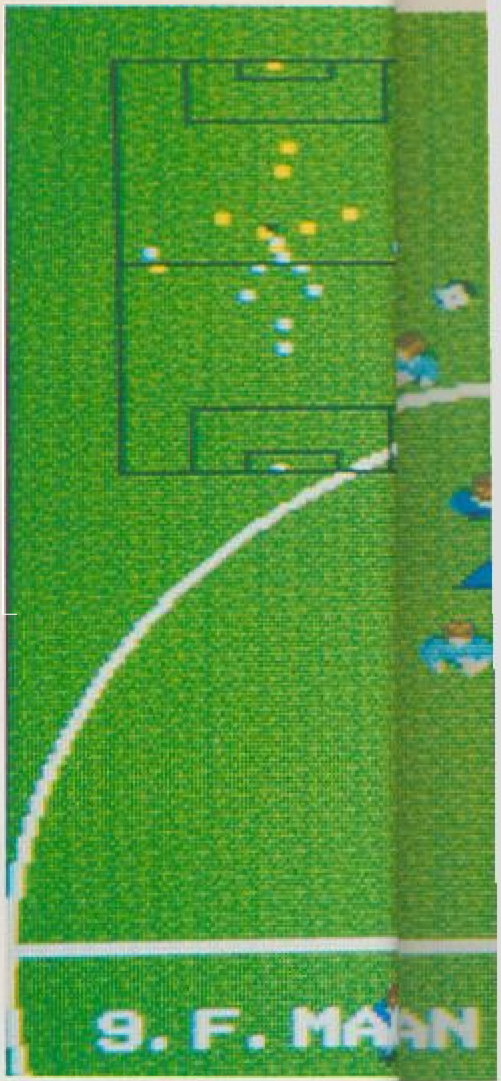


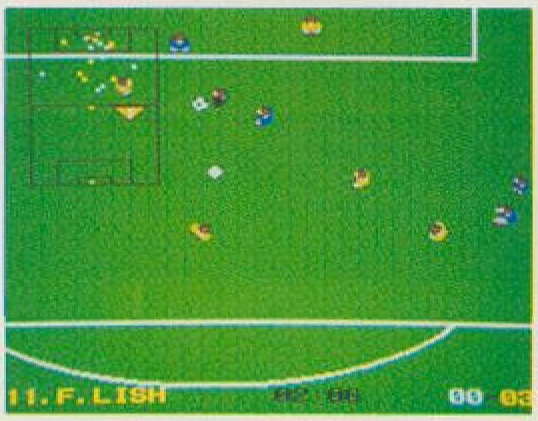
At last! Sega and Nintendo owners are set to experience the software experience of the century as *Kick Off* blasts onto the consoles. ACE, as always, is the first with the full story...

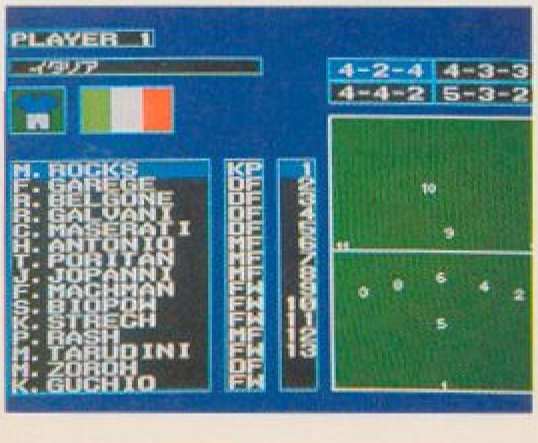
Kick Off has been the bane of console owners' lives the world over ever since it first appeared in 1989. You can have all the *Marios* and *Sonics* in the world, but it don't amount to a hill of beans if you can't play The Most Excellent Game Ever on your machine. Of course ST and Amiga owners have been having a right old laugh at this state of affairs for over two years now - but now, for those narrow minded computer owners who are into one-up-manship, the party's over - while for console gamers, it's only just beginning. After a wait that seems altogether too long, Anco has finally done the decent thing and put *Kick Off* on cartridge.

First of all, there is one rather sad piece of bad news. There isn't a MegaDrive version - at least not yet. Plans do exist for a 16-bit Sega conversion at a later time, but for now the lucky formats are the Nintendo Super FamiCom, the 8-bit NES and Sega Master System and, on the handheld front, the GameBoy and GameGear.

As you'd expect it's the FamiCom version that's looking most impressive. Top Japanese developers Imagineer (who were responsible for bringing *Populous* to the FamiCom) have handled the job, and have been sensible enough not to turn the game into a bells-and-whistles extravaganza at the expense of the gameplay. As a result it's probably the least graphically-impressive FamiCom game to date, with the traditional miniature players and sparse pitch. Admittedly things have been spruced up a tad to make use of the SFX's awesome capabilities, but the original classic's gameplay and feel remains intact - so much so that a seasoned computer *Kick Off* player could move straight onto this version with no trouble at all, bar the inevitable differences thrown up by playing with a joypad.

The game has been written primarily for the Japanese market, and has had to be retitled *Pro Soccer* - because, of all reasons, the name *Kick Off* already exists in Japan as the name of a zip fastener company! Due to the fact that the Japs like their games to play a bit more leisurely, the game has been slowed down a tad, so it's more like playing at National

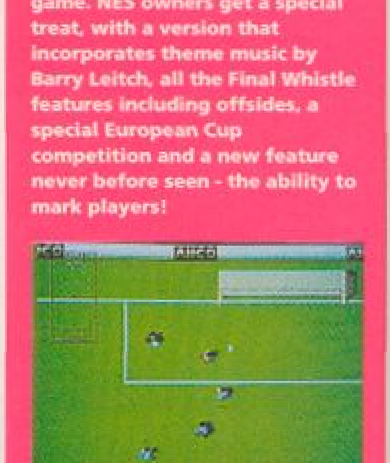




(Above left) In Japan, advance orders for *Pro Soccer* have already reached an incredible 150,000 - that's three times the amount a Famicom game needs to be a hit!
(Left) *Pro Soccer* tactics selection - note the correct names for the Italian team.

THE 8-BITS

Not even owners of 8-bit consoles will miss out on the Kick Off phenomenon - in fact they get two of the best versions! Super Kick Off will appear on NES and Master System at the beginning of 1992, and both versions look remarkably similar to the Amiga, though the graphics are just a tad blockier. Speed, of course, remains the same and as such there are no problems on the gameplay front. The Master System version (being done by US Gold) features eight top Division One teams instead of the regular TeamA and TeamB (and there's no Arsenal, hooray!) and is much similar in style to Kick Off 2 than the original game. NES owners get a special treat, with a version that incorporates theme music by Barry Leitch, all the Final Whistle features including offsides, a special European Cup competition and a new feature never before seen - the ability to mark players!



Super Kick Off on the Nintendo Entertainment System (above) promises to knock every other 8-bit football game into a cocked hat - and could well become the biggest-selling NES title to date. Quite right too!

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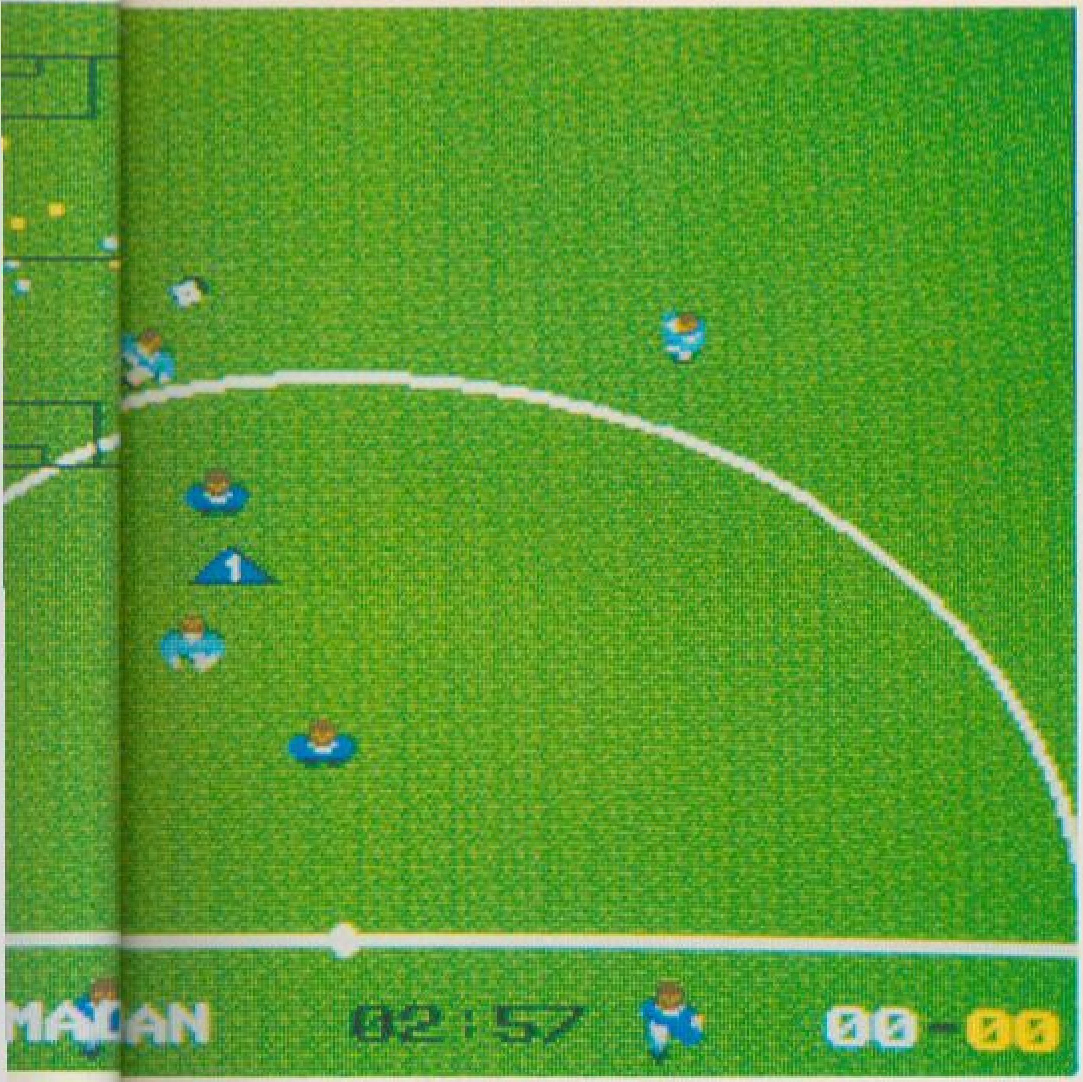


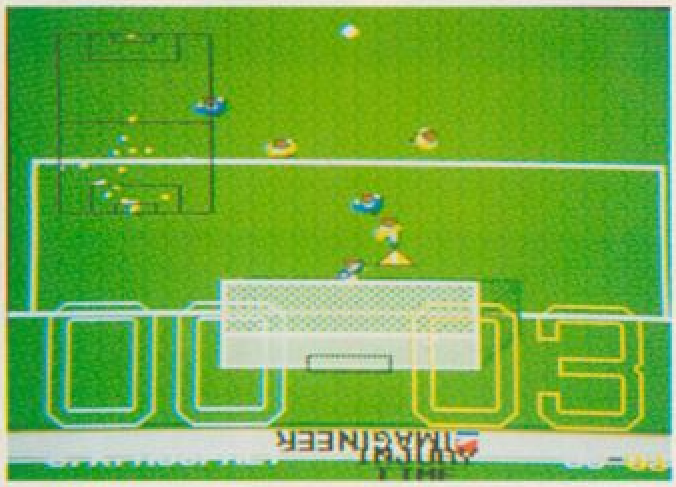
level now, rather than the ultra-frantic International level that most Kick Offers prefer. The rest of the game remains much the same - it's effectively the original *Kick Off* with a modified version of the add-on disk *Extra Time* built in. The formations, aftertouch, set-pieces and the rest are all in evidence - along with a rockin' in-game tune that, while very pleasant, unfortunately can't be turned off. The only other problem seems to be the slight jerkiness of the scroll which is apparently due to the FamiCom's in-built difficulty in handling the maths routines with drive the game. These problems, however, are set to be rectified when another version of the game is written by *Kick Off*'s original author Dino Dini for release when the FamiCom is officially launched in Europe. That may be a while though, so for those who just can't wait, *Pro Soccer* is launched in Japan on September 25th and should be filtering through here on import shortly after that.

Closer to home, the much-vaunted and long-awaited GameBoy version is being produced right here in the UK - and contrary to popular rumour no compromises are being made on the gameplay front. No wonder it's now called *Super Kick Off*.

(Above) *Pro Soccer* (aka *Kick Off* with knobs on) on the Super Famicom in action. Note the remarkable similarity to the 16-bit original - no annoying aesthetic "improvements" to get in the way here.

(Top right) More *Pro Soccer* action, this time caught just after the computer team puts in a third goal against his human opponent. Bravo!

An ACE spy sneaks an exclusive first play of Super Kick Off on the GameBoy, using a special development machine hooked up to the PC, on which the game code was written.



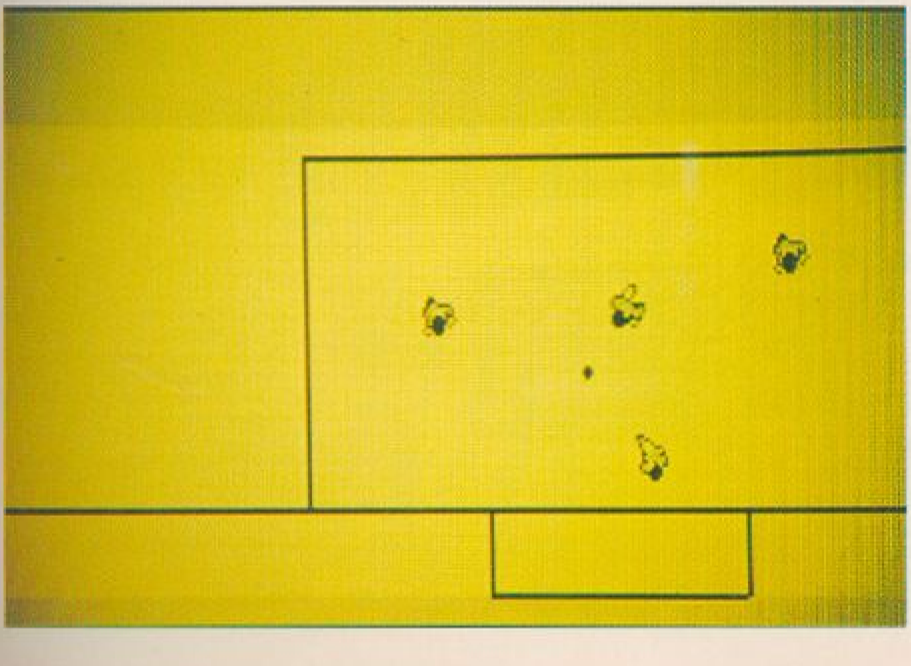
The pitch is still full-size, scrolling in all eight directions at Amiga speed. Due to the small size of the GameBoy screen and the scale of the game, the amount of pitch you actually see on screen is slightly smaller - about a quarter has been lost - but the definition of the players and pitch detail remains the same. In fact it's a little like playing the ST version with the colour turned down, as shaded lines similar to the Atari version's rasters have been implemented to show pitch movement, rather than using a complicated and CPU-mashing grass design. It's quite remarkable, given the constraints of the machine, just how authentic GameBoy *Kick Off* is. Everything is there - the referees, pitch types, stats, tactics, wind, aftertouch... It certainly feels the same to play, and the only problems to arise seem to be some difficulty in executing complex moves with the controller.

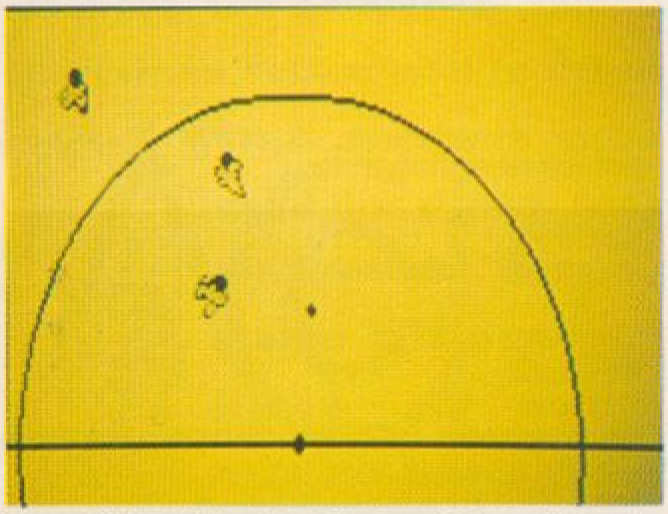
Super Kick Off will be multi-player, although at this stage Anco is unsure exactly what form this option will take. Information is filtering through about the ability to link as many as eight GameBoys together using a special adaptor, but to date it's still all pie in the sky, so the most likely option at the moment is a regular two-player option using the standard link cable, But whatever changes are yet to be made, the release date for *Super Kick Off* remains firm - the early part of next year. As for the GameGear, that's expected to be almost identical to the Master System version (see THE 8-BITS) - hardly surprising considering both machines are almost identical technically.

Oooh, it's all exciting isn't it? One thing's for sure - *Kick Off* is going to do a BOMB when it arrives over here. At a time when the console software scene could do with a boot up the backside, this could be just the enema it's been waiting for. In fact we're so sure of it, we're on the pitch! We think it's all over!

It is now!

● **Gary Whitta**





(Above and left) Don't believe that the GameBoy version is every bit as good as the original? Here's the pictorial proof, taken from the almost-complete development version. It's even managed a couple of technical enhancements over the ST version, such as the inclusion of a centre circle! Unfortunately there's no scanner, as the size of the GameBoy screen simply wouldn't allow it.

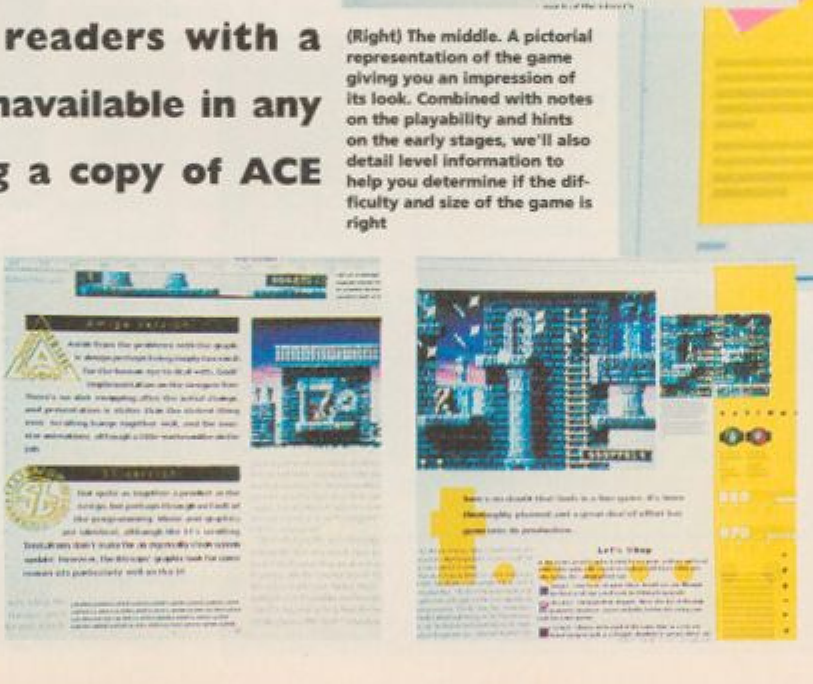
NEW Horizons

ACE Magazine is changing.

We've always endeavoured to provide the finest window on the computer entertainment scene, and to our minds have had no small success. However, time waits for no magazine, and to coincide with the 50th issue of ACE, we've selected our November issue as an opportunity to consolidate our position as the UK's top games magazine with a new look, new content and new size.

Our aim is to become the A-Z of Games, providing our readers with a depth of information unavailable in any other magazine. Buying a copy of ACE each month will keep you so thoroughly informed and entertained that you'll wonder what you ever saw in any other publication.

(Right) The middle. A pictorial representation of the game giving you an impression of its look. Combined with notes on the playability and hints on the early stages, we'll also detail level information to help you determine if the difficulty and size of the game is right



(Right) The conclusion. By the time you reach the end of these pages, there should be nothing more you need to know about the game. This is also the domain of the scores, the version information and the summary. How long will you be playing? How well does it hold together on your machine? All this and more. Once ACE has had its say, there's nothing left to be said. Kiss goodbye to those try-before-you-buy blues!

So what's new?

Yeh, yeh, so you've heard it all before. The last word in games. The definitive guide to your computer. The ultimate magazine for the ultimate computer. A magazine with an attitude (oh, *please*). The computer press seems most proficient at making wild claims, but less capable of fulfilling them. At ACE we prefer to let our product, not our slogans do the talking.

Main ACE reviews will be SIX pages long. Each month, between eight and ten of the most important games releases will receive a grilling unlike anything you've ever seen. A complete playtest guaranteed to take even the most polished games to their breaking point, and beyond. Take a look at the sample review shown on this very page and note some of the factors ensuring ACE's reviews bring you closer to the feel of a game than ever before!

Each screentest will also feature a special pictorial treatment of the game on the third and fourth page, with criticism on design and hints on play.

However hard you may try, it's difficult to find much to fault the Bitmap's game design. Especially on the puzzle-evolution front, the pacing of the game is sound. Hack & slash stages give way in the latter part of the game to more cerebrally animated levels.

(Left) The beginning. Our initial impressions of the game and the "twist"; what is supposed to make the title special. We'll also compare and contrast the new game with a similar title in the same genre, its original incarnation, the coin-op or movie providing you with an easy refer-

Every game reviewed!

As well as our major reviews, we'll be examining *every* title released in the month in a digest section. And there'll be a section detailing the quality or otherwise of games still on the shelves. ACE will provide all the information necessary to decide whether or not to pur-

compare & contrast

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And just in case that doesn't sound appealing enough for you, we'll be giving away a free supplement every month providing even *more* information on the games scene.

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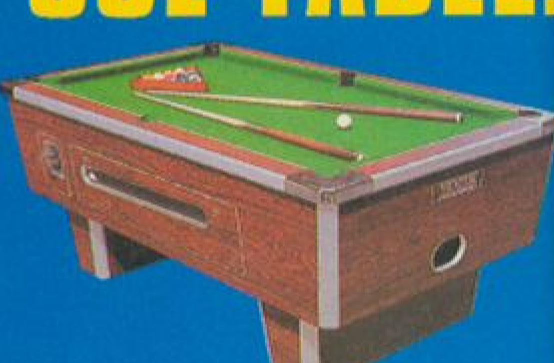

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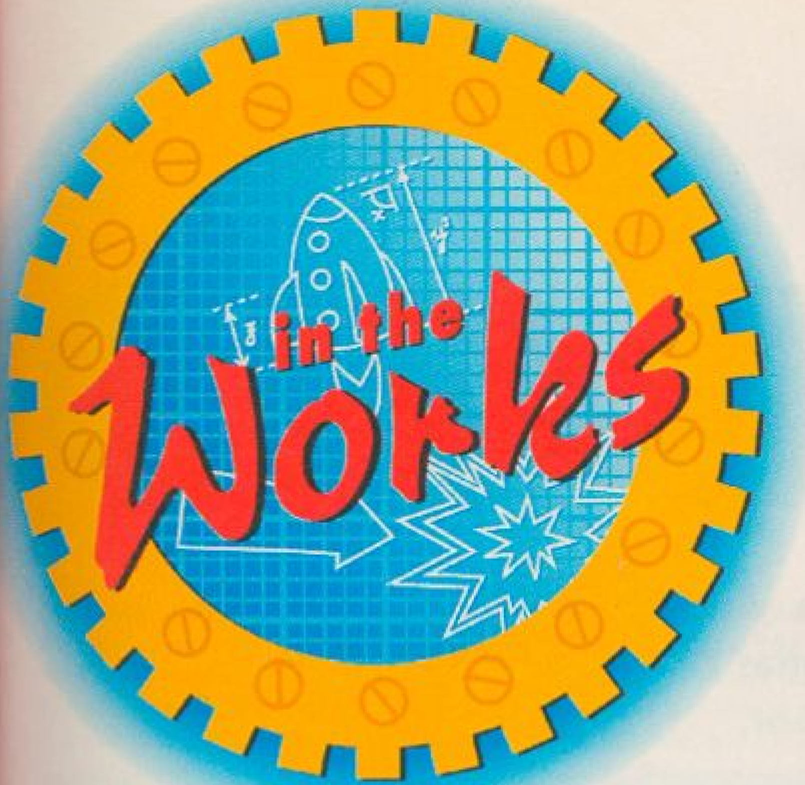


THE SOFTWARE HOUSE COOKERY COURSE

(Man's voice) **Hmmm, those look good. What are they?**

(Woman's voice) **They're called 'sprites' and they're for a game I'm making called *Laser Deathkillers 3*.**

Sounds good. Need any help?

Yes, please. Dice this parallax-scrolling routine I prepared earlier and put the pieces in the big mixing bowl.

Ouch! It's still a bit hot!

Careful you don't cut your hand on those background graphics - they're a bit sharp!

Okay, I've done that, what next?

Now add those sprites you saw and fold them in.

Right. This is good fun, isn't it?

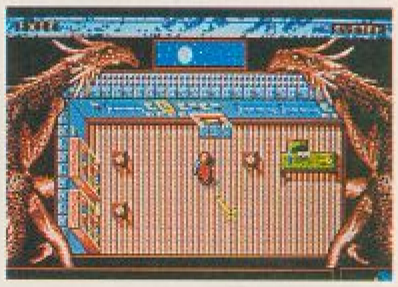
Yes, it is. Now, while you're doing that, I'll prepare some gameplay. This is made from a sprinkling of *Xenon 2*, a pinch of *Mario* and a dash of *Ikari Warriors*. Blend thoroughly then add the mixture to the sprites and the scrolling.

Yum, it's looking good already. Mind if I have a quick taste?

Oh, all right. But wash your hands first...

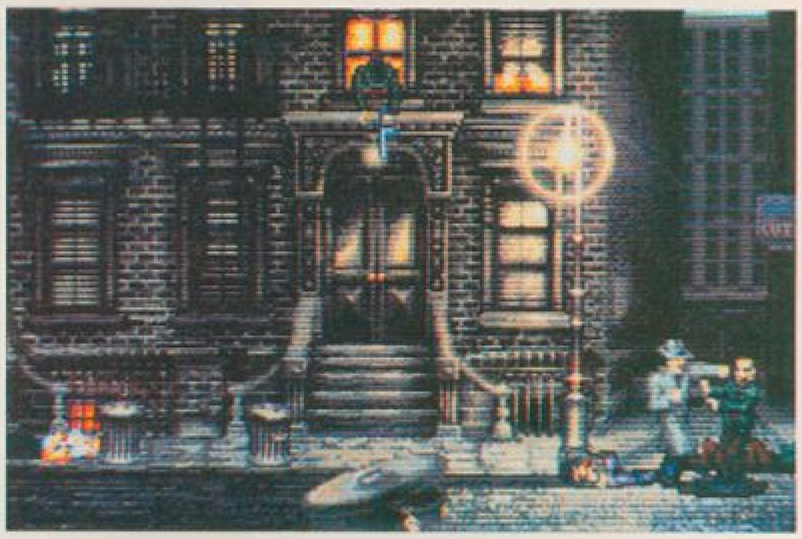
36 DAEMONSGATE

Mystic lands. Fallen empires. Stupid names. Interactive characters and ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY ONE THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED screens of play area. All these and more can be found in the years-in-the-making epic from Gremlin. Jim Douglas rubs his chin and has a look.



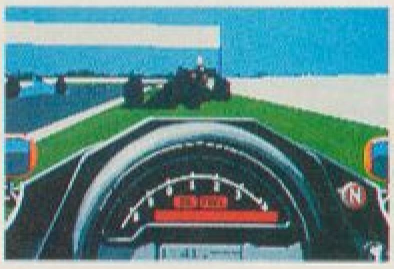
40 GODFATHER

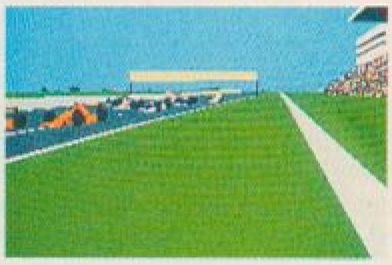
Creative Materials - the folks behind *Line of Fire* and *ESWAT* - are nearing completion of their all-in-one conversion of the Coppola opus. ACE's Luca Brasi, Gary Whitta, talked to the team about source material, period setting and guns.



44 GRAND PRIX

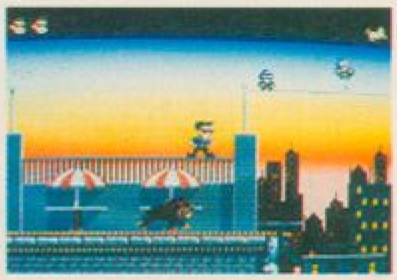
Indy 500 beware! The legendary Geoff Crammond, creator of such software classics as The Sentinel and Stunt Car Racer, is programming what could well be the ultimate polygon-based car-racing game. Jim Douglas takes a peak under the black tarpaulin.





46 HUDSON HAWK

Oh, would you like to play a good tie-in? Or would you rather play a pig? Thankfully, Special FX looks set to give those with a preference for the former the chance to do so with their *Mario*-esque game-of-the-film. Gary Whitta dons shades, a wry grin and a bald patch and takes a look...



In the Works

DAEMONS

Come in *Ultima,* your time is up! ACE takes an early look at what GREMLIN hopes will be its Christmas cracker.

When it comes to promoting *Daemonsgate,* Gremlin certainly isn't sparing the hyperbole: "the cutting edge of computer RPG technology" and "the largest and most in-depth game of its genre yet" are just a couple of the choice buzz-building phrases being banded about by the booming Sheffield-based software house.

The vast project is being handled by Imagitec, a 42-strong development team situated in the heart of Yorkshire. The company have been responsible for a huge number of top software titles - far too many to list here - across all formats, including the 16-bit consoles and the handhelds.

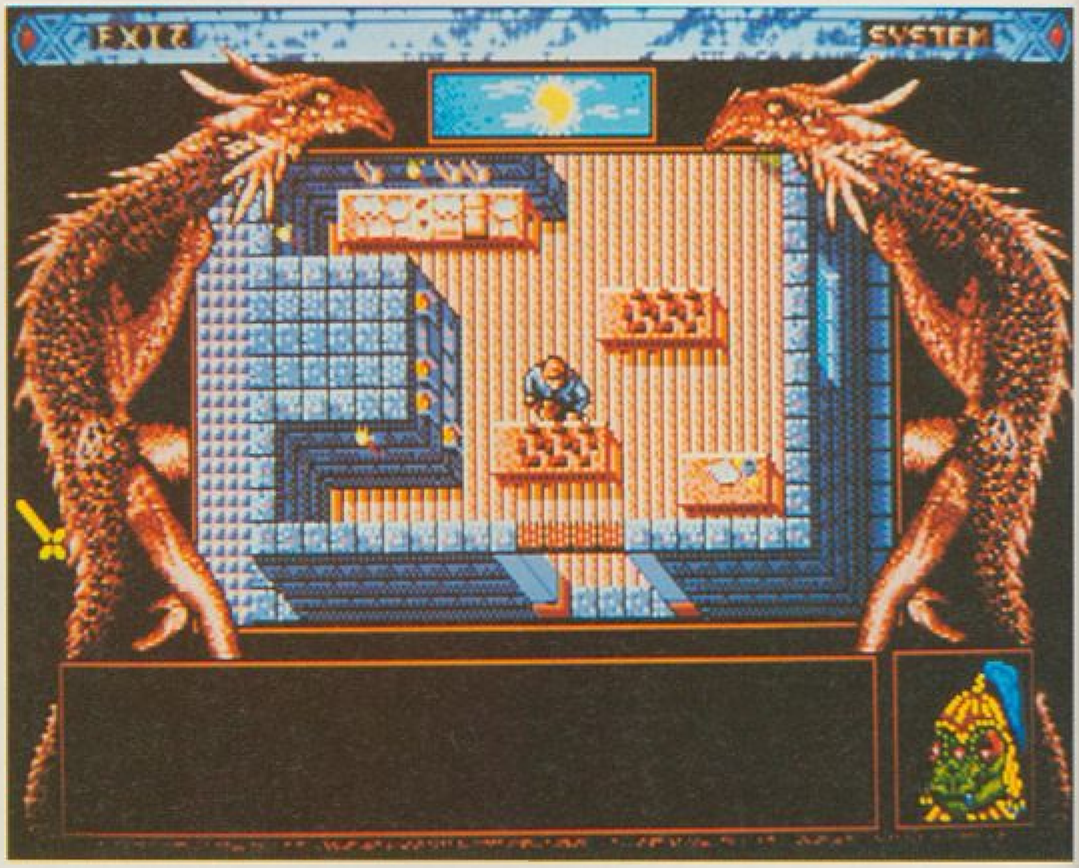
But without a doubt *Daemonsgate* is Imagitec's most complex project: for the past two years a small army of designers, programmers and graphic and sound artists have been working on it. Martin Hooley, Imagitec's MD, explains *Daemonsgate's* genesis: "In the past we've done work for Origin converting *Ultimas V* and *VI* and *Times of Lore* onto various formats, and these gave us ideas for an RPG of our own. We wanted to write a game with a truly atmospheric and realistic game world.

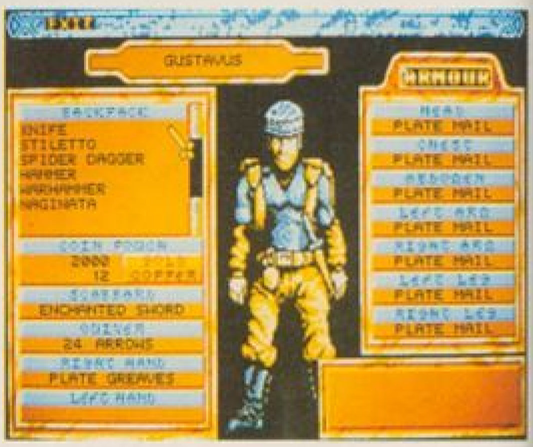
"We spent six months researching and creating a complex and believable game world, complete with a fully-detailed mythos, a social hierarchy, a realistic ecology and a logically laid-out geography. The documentation for the game world alone is over six inches thick! We feel it's the most rational fantasy environment ever created for a computer game."

DASTARDLY PLOT

Put very simply, the plot centres around the adventures of the noble Captain Gustavus (you, of course), who travels around the continent of Elsopea in search of the ancient mystic who holds the knowledge that will save Gustavus' home city of Tormis from a mysterious and unbelievably-powerful Daemonic army. Along the way Gustavus meets all manner of friends and foes, some of whom can be recruited to join his quest.

The most immediately impressing thing about *Daemonsgate* is its size. It's big. Very big. The land of Elsopea measures 600 km x 1000 km, which translates to over three-thousand screens of play area. Says Martin: "The game is being developed primarily on the PC, with the ST and Amiga versions lagging slightly behind it. At the moment it looks like the PC game will come on five discs packed with compressed data in two versions, one for EGA users and one for VGA users. Unfortunately the Amiga game, which is looking very slick, is likely to be 1Mb only."



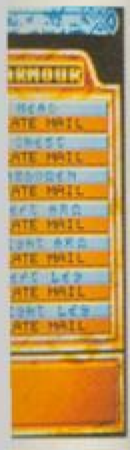


(Above) The cities are not deserted. Four hundred citizens teem through the street, going about their daily business (getting up, going to work, going to the inn at lunchtime - must be a journalist - and so on). Says Martin: "From previous projects we've had a lot of experience writing these time-line editors, as we call them. They enable us to create inhabitants which can do almost anything we want."

(Right) Unlike some RPGs, the player's characters can't carry infinite amounts of equipment. Each game object has a certain weight, and load one of your characters up too much and they'll start to suffer.

Unlike a certain RPG series one could name, the map will scroll smoothly as the Gustavus' party, represented by an icon, trek across it. As other groups of characters approach they appear on the map as featureless icons. The player can send a scout or spy to find out if the groups are friendly or hostile and then whether to intercept or avoid them as appropriate. The groups are not random - each is related to the political and geographical nature of the area being passed through.

Weather and terrain all affect how fast a character can get from A to B. Explains Martin: "Although the game's playing speed remains constant, the game-time elapsed varies according to the speed you're currently moving at. Say you're travelling across a bog. Although it'll take the same time to cross as any other map area in real time, the in-game clock will have registered that it takes longer to cross a bog than normal ground. We were going to have the character's on-screen movement actually slow down, but although this looks good it eventually just becomes annoying for the player."



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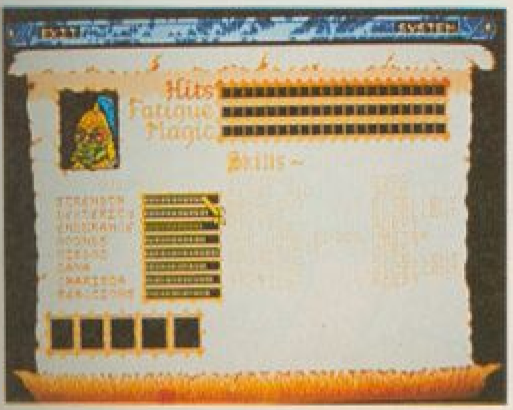
On Gustavus' travels, he'll come across many computer-controlled characters, up to eight of whom can be recruited into his merry band. Martin is keen to stress that these computer characters are not just creatures that only come to life when the player is nearby: "These characters are not merely a collection of statistics, they're intelligent inhabitants of the world who, when not controlled by the player, go about their own business, completely independent of the player's action. We've spent a lot of time perfecting the character interaction, so that the player feels he's 'living' in a real world."

On entering one of the seven major cities in Elsopea, the view switches to a close-up plan lay-out of the streets and buildings. Each city has its own individual street map measuring over ten-thousand screens in size, separated into five levels: the basement/sewer and the ground, first, second and third floors. Some of the landscape features, such as torches and fireplace, are animated for increased atmosphere, and a masking routine allows characters to pass under certain objects.

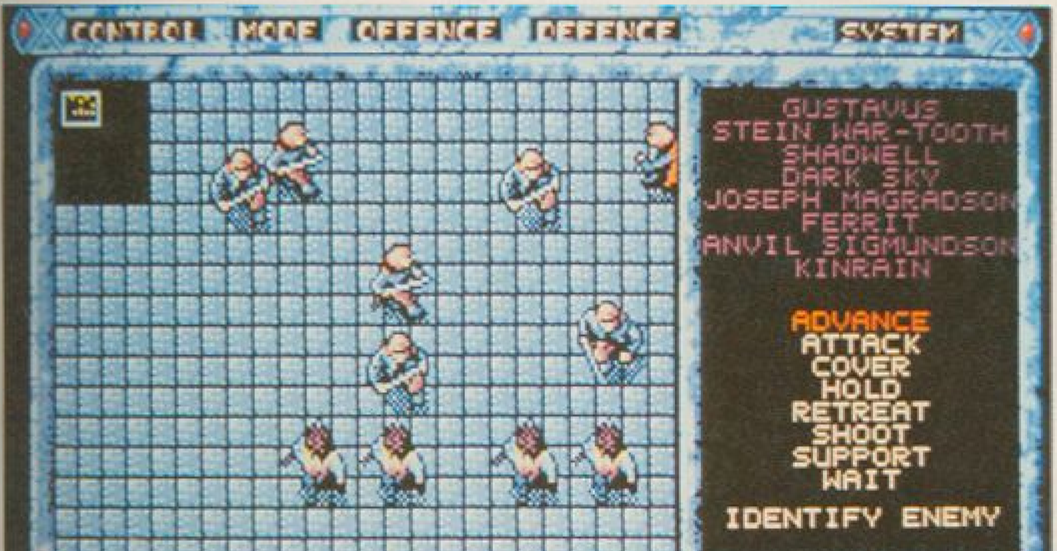
Apart from the cities there are five other maps detailing various villages, fortresses and dungeons. In total, there are over one-hundred-thousand screens of town maps and over four-thousand inhabitants, which Martin claim is "the largest map size and the most non-player characters yet seen in an RPG."

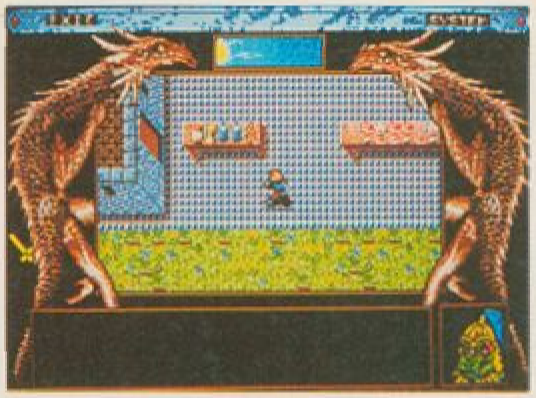
Elsopea is a pretty rough place and it's unlikely to be too long before Gustavus and the boys get involved in a fight. The player acts as commander of the group, sending orders to the members of the party. The computer then interprets the player's orders depending on the character's personality (i.e. brave, cowardly, rash, etc). The complex combat handler can take account of all manner of variables, such as the use of poison and magic.

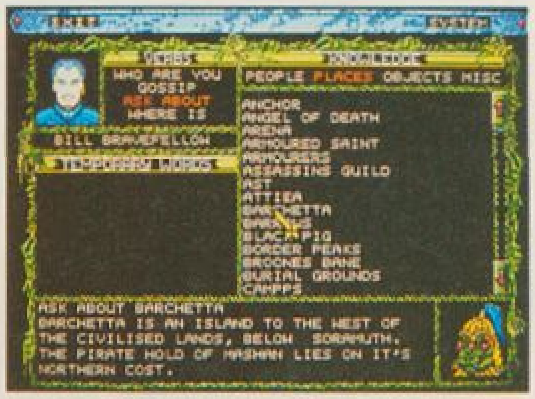


(Left) This screen details a character's statistics, such as hit points, fatigue level and magic power. Probably the most important is the character's credibility. Martin explains: "The non-player characters respond to you depending on what you've done. If you've been cowardly and you try to recruit a famous barbarian then he'll probably laugh in your face. But if you're heroic then the barbarian may well come to you and beg you to let him join your party."

(Below) On the combat screen you (as Gustavus) can order your party of up to eight warriors into battle and direct them from the menu of actions to the right of the screen. Each character's personality affects how they react to your orders - send a coward to the front ranks and he may well scarper!







ASK ABOUT BARCHETTA
BARCHETTA IS AN ISLAND TO THE WEST OF THE CIVILISED LANDS, BELOW SORAMUTH. THE PIRATE HOLD OF MASHAN LIES ON IT'S NORTHERN COST.

(Top) Gustavus squeezes the juicy fruit on the market stalls. The city maps are built up from over one-thousand 8 x 8 pixel blocks. This cuts down on memory usage while at the same time allowing a great deal of graphical variety. "We want *Daemonsgate* to look awesome," says Martin. "These days nobody wants to play games with little Xs and Ys fighting ?s."

(Above) Chatting with the locals is very straightforward. Simply make a selection from the 'Verb' list (such as 'Ask about' or 'Where is') and a selection from the 'Noun' list (such as a location or a character's name). By high-lighting words in the reply you can expand your list of nouns and ask further questions. Comments Martin: "Everyone you meet can be talked to. This conversation system was designed to work with or without a keyboard, partly for ease of use and also so that *Daemonsgate* can be converted to console or CD-ROM platforms with a minimum of fuss."

SEQUELITIS

As the game's full title (*Daemonsgate I - Dorovan's Key*) suggests, this is just the first in a series of adventures. Was this always intended? "Yes, from day one," explains Martin. "The core system was designed in modules so that it's easy to expand and enhance any aspect of it for future games. In addition, we've spent months writing development utilities to make game creation easier, so the next in the series should take between six and nine months to appear.

"But what we don't want to do with *Daemonsgate II: Nomads* and *Daemonsgate III: Homecoming*,' emphasises Martin, "is just to produce Daemonsgate I with a different storyline and new graphics. We want the player to feel he's getting new features that he didn't get in previous games. We're not in the game of ripping people off. One of the things I'd like in *Daemonsgate II* is to have causes from that adventure have effect in *Daemonsgate III*. Therefore, if you killed Bob Smith in II then in III his relatives might be out for revenge."

In conclusion, what does Martin have to say about *Daemonsgate* in comparison to Origin's much-lauded Ultima series? "Oh, I'm not very good at making these sorts of statements," he laughs. "Er... *Daemonsgate* is an *Ultima* beater." And the nice thing is he may well be right.

● **David Upchurch**

PLAY THE GAME MAN

Hello fellow humans! Bartholomew J. Simpson here, with a very important secret:

SPACE MUTANTS ARE INVADING SPRINGFIELD

That's right man! A buncha slimy, horrible, totally gross and putrid monsters are taking over the bodies of the people who live here and they wanna build a weapon that's gonna take over the entire planet!

PReTTy CoOL, HUh?

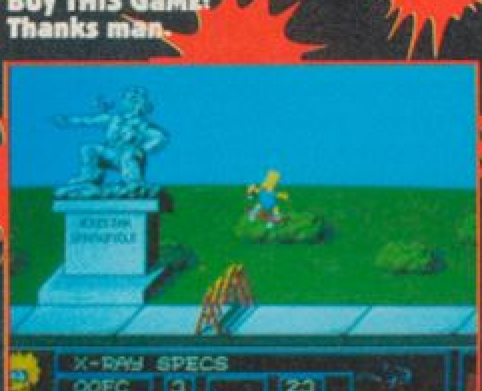
Anyway, yours truly is the only one who can see 'em! I've gotta spray-paint things, get radical on my skateboard, use my trusty slingshot, and in general behave like a nuisance, man.

Plus, with evil dudes like Nelson the bully and Sideshow Bob getting in my way, it's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out!

So if you're a decent person a patriot, and somebody who cares about this sorry planet, you'll do the right thing.

SAVE THE EARTH

BUy THIS GaME!
Thanks man.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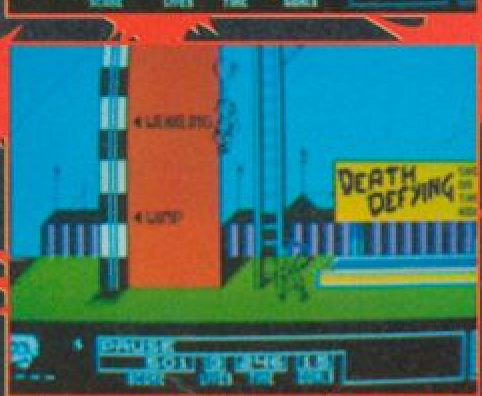
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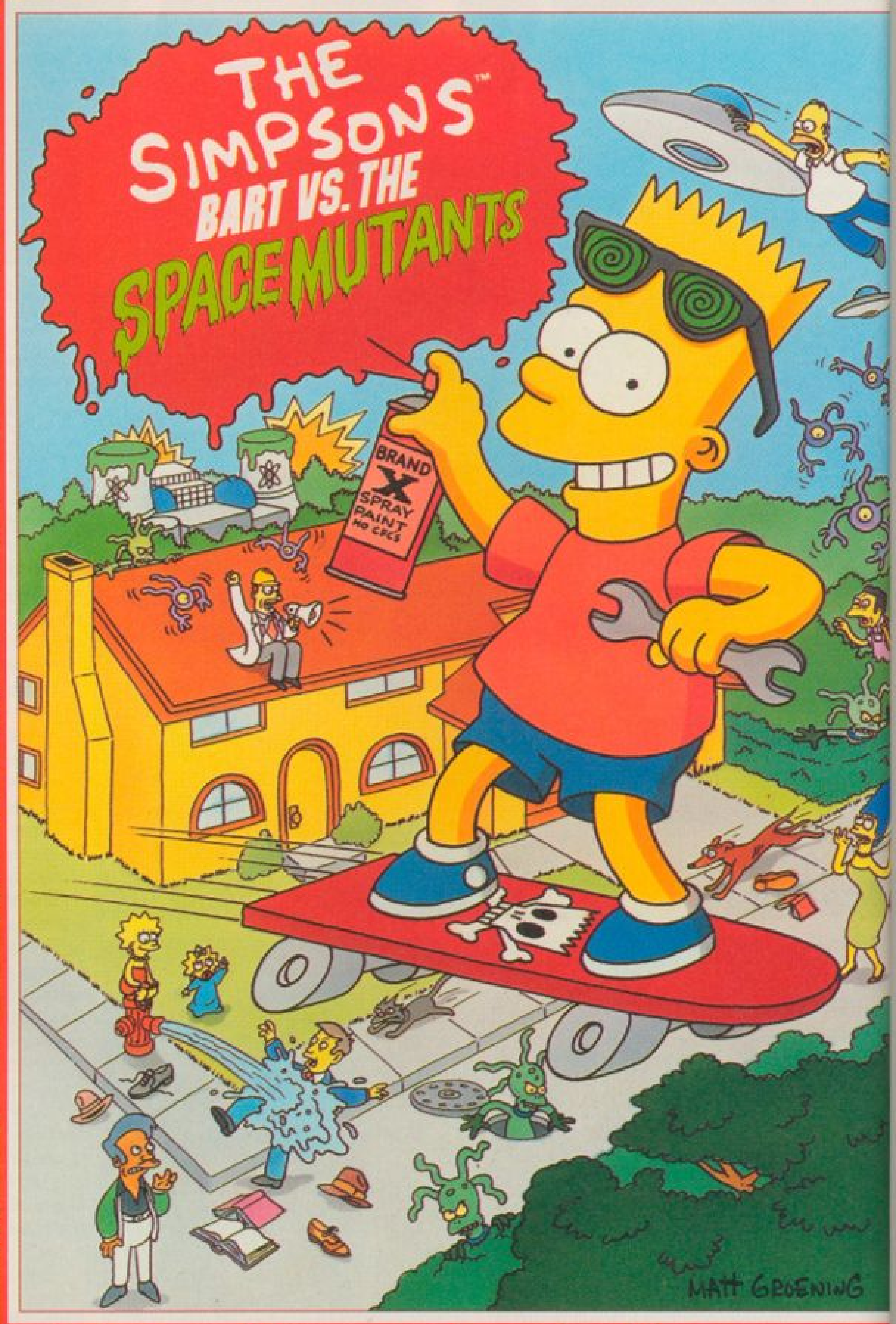
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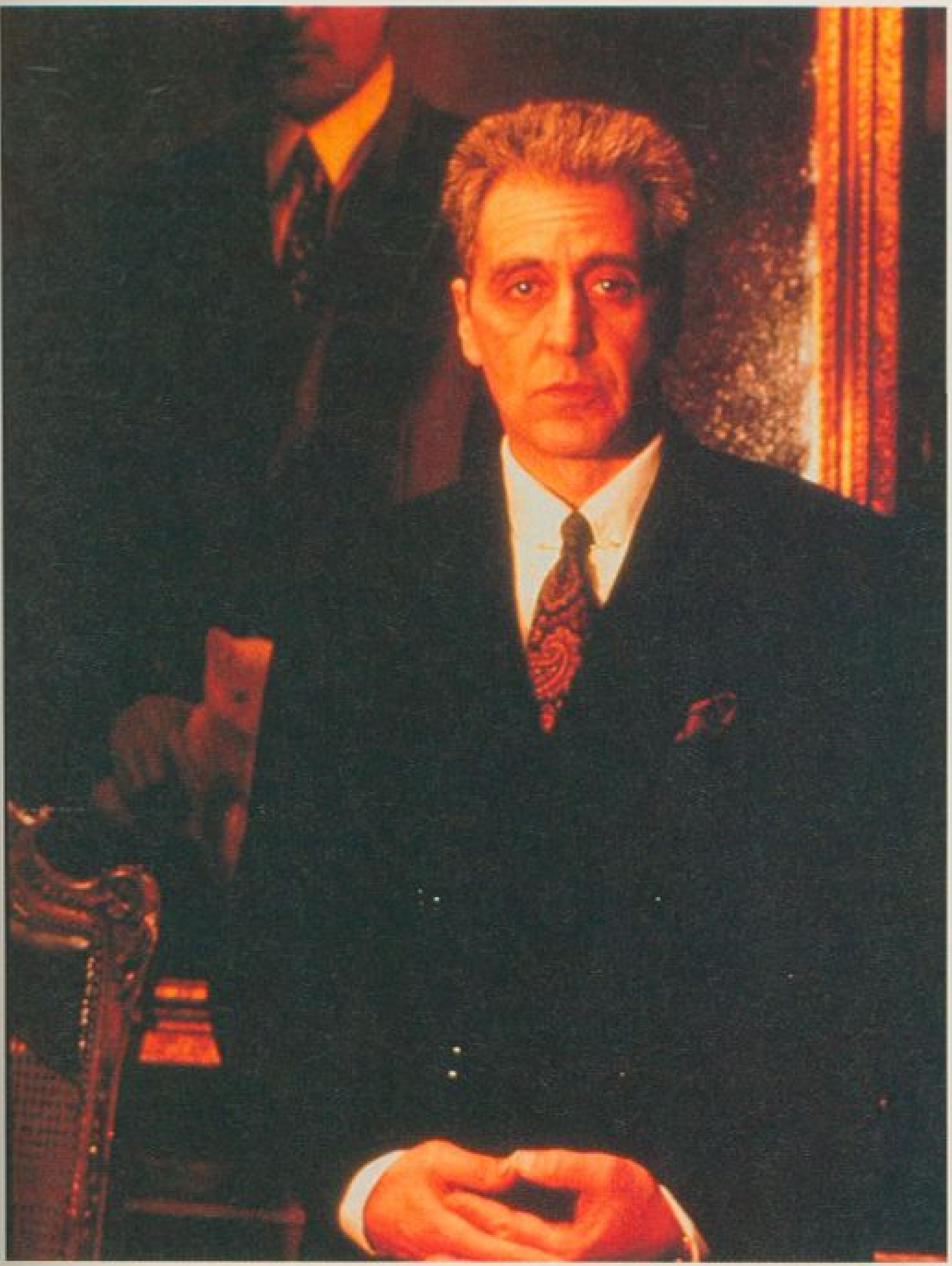
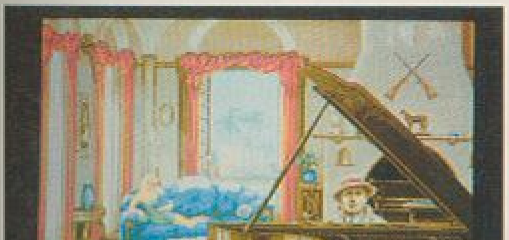
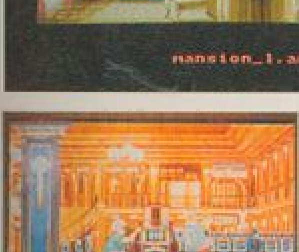


Can you really squeeze eighty years of history and one of the greatest cinema epics of all time into 16 bits? US Gold and Creative Materials think so, and they're not taking the Michael.

THE GODFATHER





(Above) One of Pete Lyon's exquisite back-drops for *The Godfather* - the result of much painstaking research.

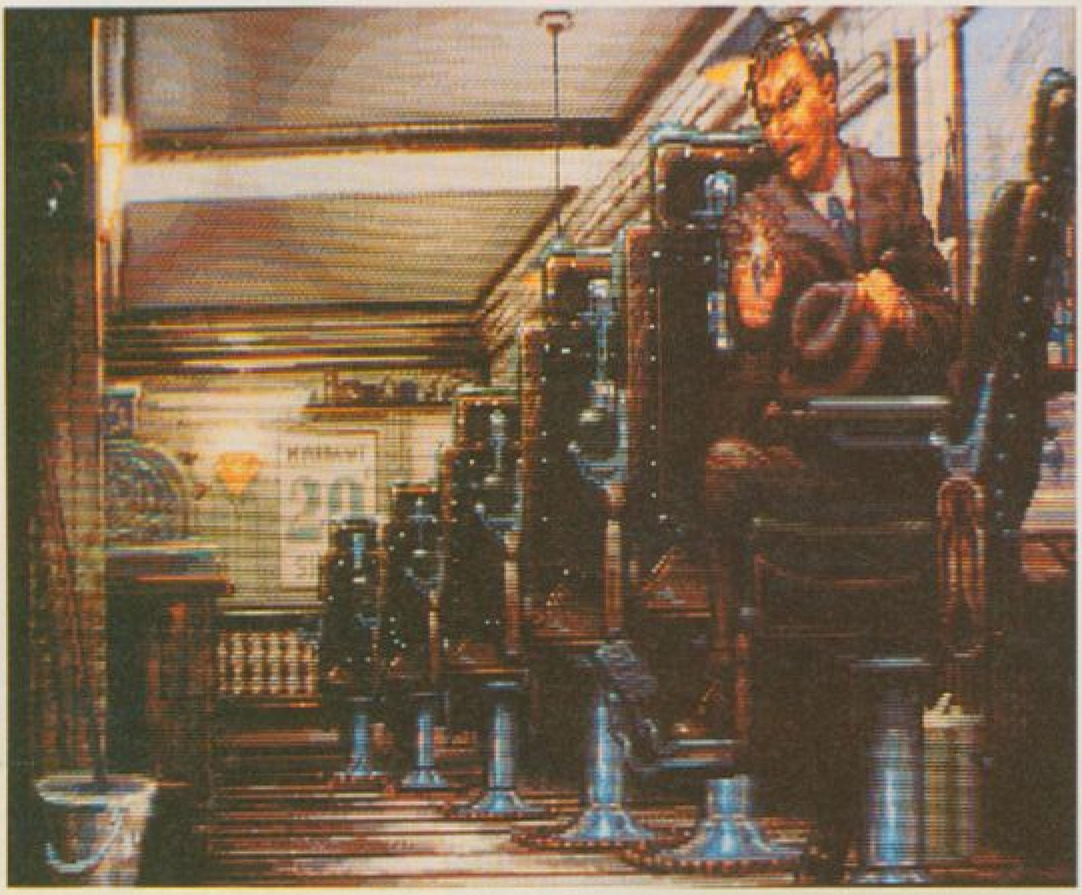
(Left) Another detailed screen, this time, this time the Las Vegas casino.

"I believe in America. America has made my fortune..."

And with that immortal line begins *The Godfather*, Francis Ford Coppola and Mario Puzo's epic three-volume tale of violence, corruption and crime over eighty years in the life of the Corleone mafia family. Since the first film was released in 1972, the trilogy has spanned 19 years, won 12 Oscars - and now inspired a computer game.

It's a bit of an odd licence. Granted, it fulfils most of the criteria required of a film licence ideally - the film made a bomb, is a household name more or less everywhere and is packed to the brim with shootouts and other violent episodes. However, unlike the *Total Recalls* and *Terminator 2s*, *The Godfather*'s rather serious theme and sombre mood isn't exactly suited for translation into the fun-orientated world of computer gaming. Or is it? Delphine Software in France (authors of *Future Wars*, *Operation Stealth* and *Cruise For A Corpse*) are currently working on an adventure-orientated interpretation for release next year, but in the meantime UK-based Creative Materials is putting the finishing touches to its effort, an arcade actioner that takes elements from all three movies and pours them all into one level-based pot that encompasses the entire trilogy.

"We were offered the chance to do a game design for *The Godfather* in December last year," says Creative Materials top boy and Godfather project leader Nick Vincent, "and the first thing we thought of was doing some kind of adventure game. Then we were told that that side of things



(Above) Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) cuddles his weasley brother Fredo in *The Godfather Part II* - little does the balding chump know that by the end of the movie he'll be sleeping with the fishes.

(Right) The sombre tone of the *Godfather* movies has been captured in US Gold's adaptation - as this moody street scene demonstrates.

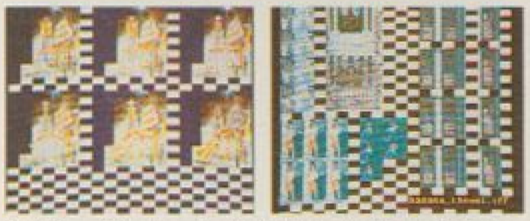
was already being taken care of by Delphine, so that just left us with doing an action game. At the time I'd seen the first two Godfather films, and after we got the project I saw the third in America in January."

"There was no way we could ever reproduce all the story of the Godfather in one game, so we chose an episodic approach to the action," Vincent explains. "The game's made up of a series of levels that starts in 1940s New York and advances a decade at a time to the final level, which is set in Middle America in the present day. Originally what we wanted from the game was to have something that had more to it than just shooting and hitting people. We experimented with elements like that, but the game became too adventurey and the mix of styles just didn't work. Another consideration for us was, because we're doing the Sega console versions of the game as well, we had to do something that could be similar across all the formats."

It's often the norm that when a film licence is signed, the movie studio wants little to do with the development of the game itself and is rarely keen to offer much in the way of help. Paramount Pictures, however, from whom the *Godfather* was signed, has a reputation worse than most. In all Paramount licences, a strict set of guidelines have to be strictly adhered to on penalty of something very nasty indeed.

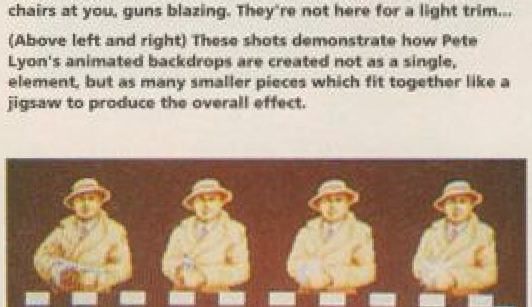
Previous Paramount licences such as *The Untouchables* and *Days of Thunder* have all had to conform, and things didn't get much better with *The Godfather*, as Nick explains. "With a Paramount film, you're not allowed to copy the storyline of the film directly, or have pictures of characters that resemble the real actors, or use digitised images from the film or reproduce the film's theme music. The film people wanted to see things on a constant basis, but because they don't have computers, we had to supply them with videos, which meant that they had no idea of what the gameplay was all about. When they saw early versions of the game, they said it was too violent! We argued that it has to be like that to reflect the film, and then they started saying that *The Godfather Part III* wasn't a violent film! In the end, though, we managed to talk them down and we didn't have to compromise on the violence."

The game itself casts the player as an anonymous hood who must work his way up through the ranks of the Corleone family by successfully completing missions for the Don. The action starts in the slums of New York, 1945 and progresses through 50s Las Vegas, Cuba during the revolution in the 60s, Miami in the 1970s and finally the present day. Due to Paramount's scenario restrictions, none of the levels are based on specific movie scenes - instead they're intended to captured the overall mood and setting of certain parts of the trilogy, hence the progression through the decades.



(Top) One of the *Operation Wolf*-style sub-sections. This is the barber's shop scene, in which the bad guys swivel round on the chairs at you, guns blazing. They're not here for a light trim...

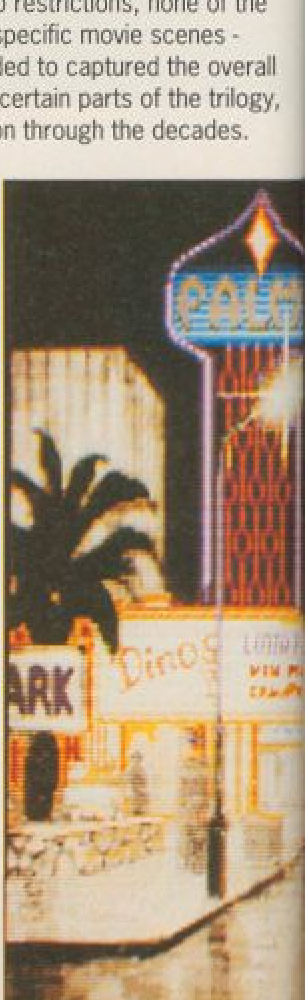
(Above left and right) These shots demonstrate how Pete Lyon's animated backdrops are created not as a single, element, but as many smaller pieces which fit together like a jigsaw to produce the overall effect.



(Left) This work-in-progress animation sequence shows how the close-up bad guys will cop it in the first-person sub-sections. Note the use of blood to provide extra realism.

(Below left) The ultra-violent helicopter attack sequence from *The Godfather Part III* - Creative have a chopper attack in the game, but due to copyright regulations, it's not based directly on this scene.

(Right) Hey! It's the city that never sleeps! Notice that Johnny Fontane in playing in town...



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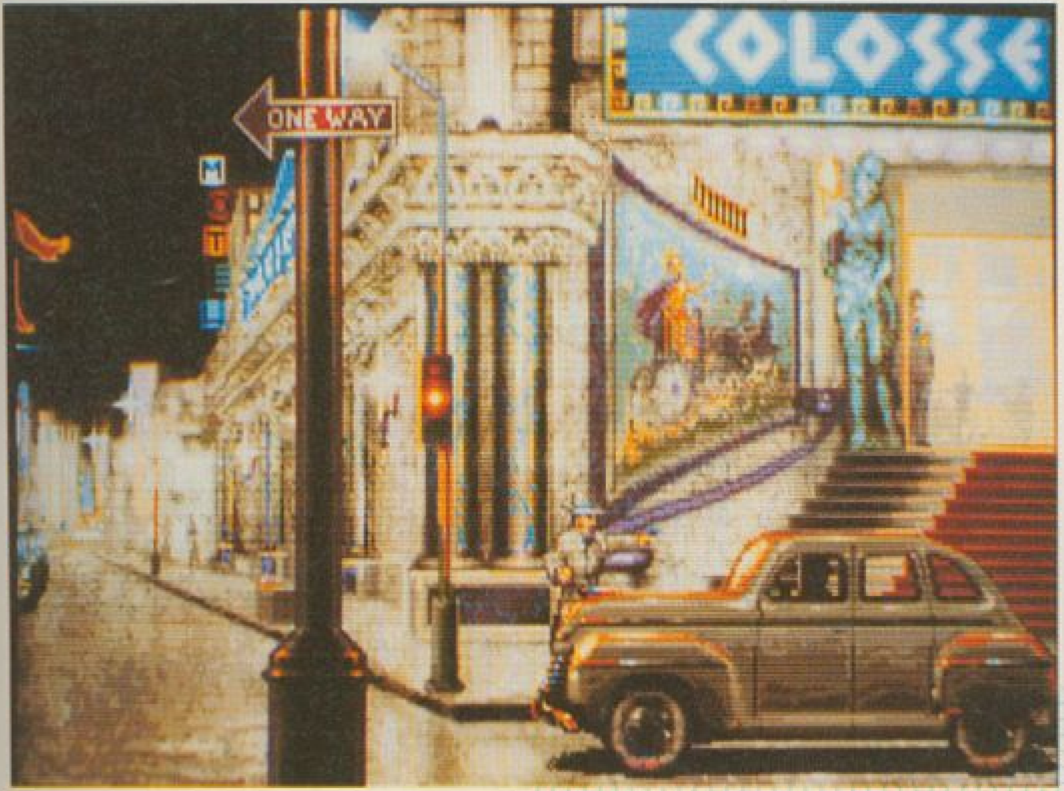
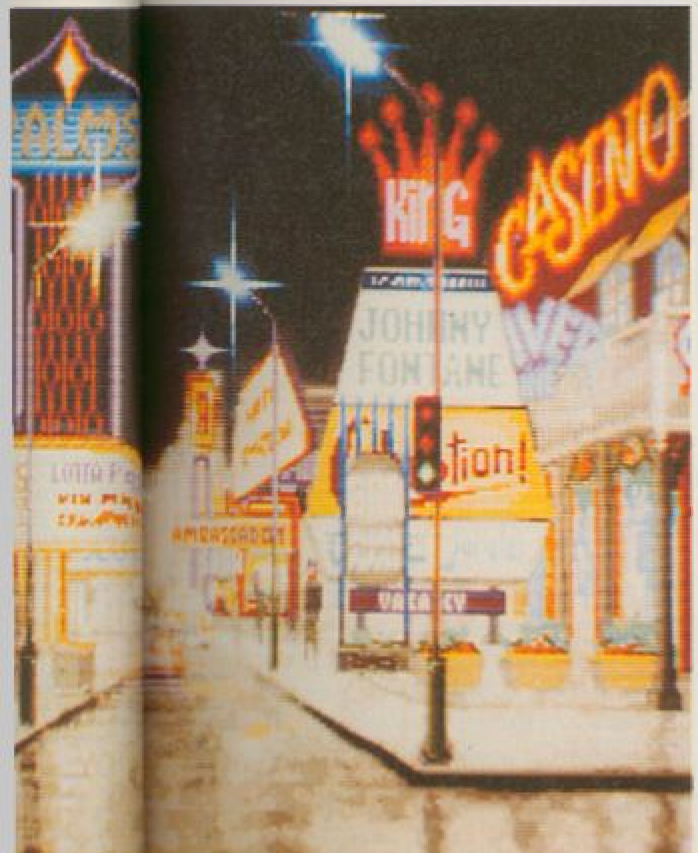


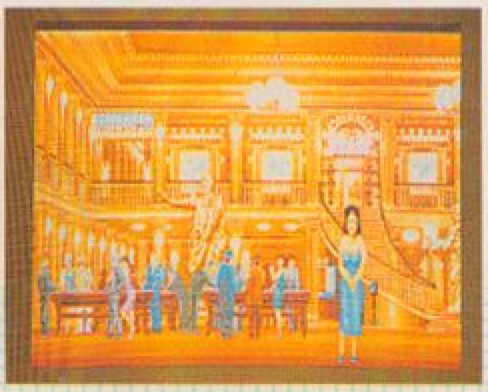
Each level is essentially a horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em-up with a built-in task that, when completed, will gain you access to the next decade.

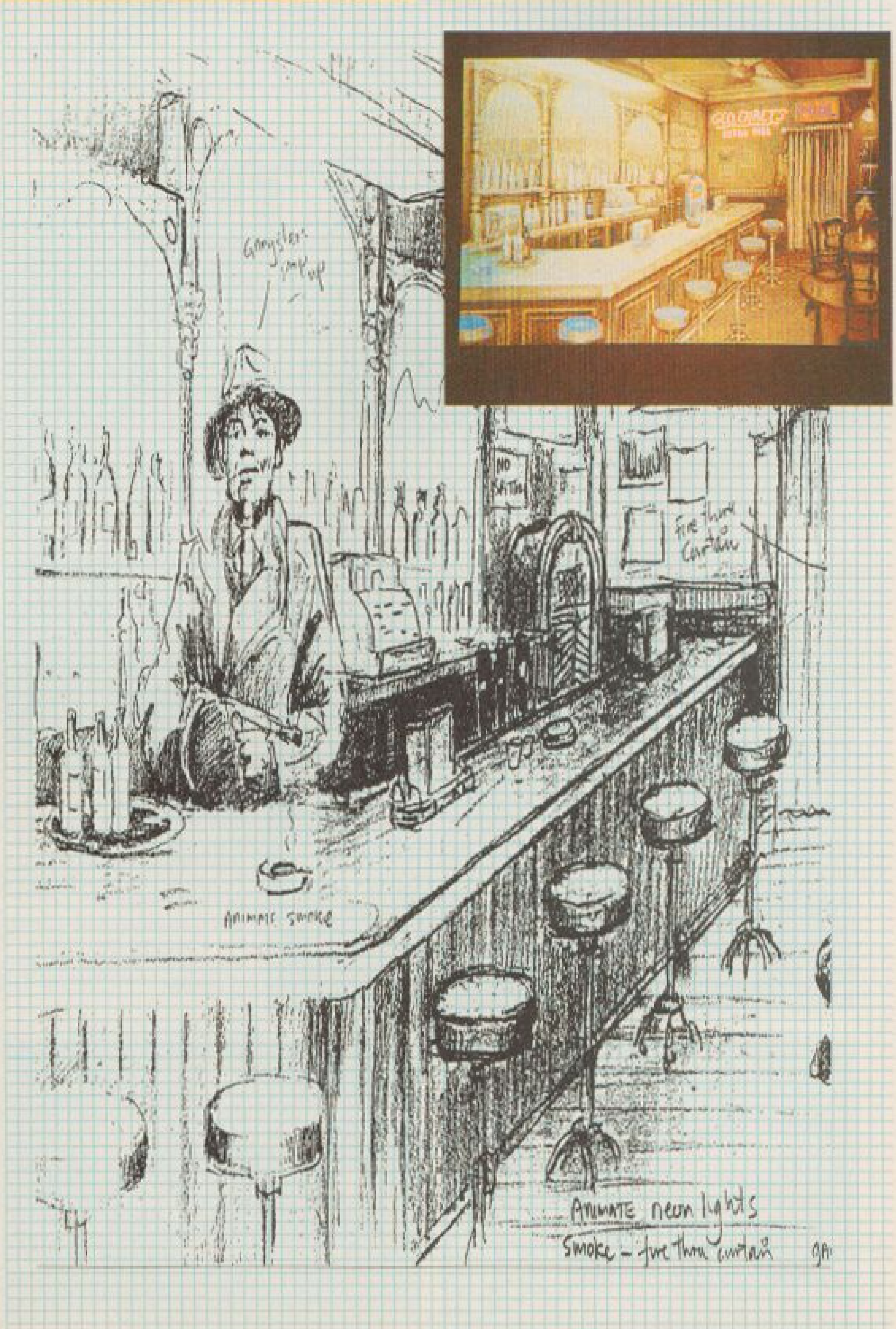
The tasks range from killing somebody to collecting an object, but they all basically entail getting through the army of hoods and assassins that are all out to get you and make it to the end of the level. As you trot down the street, hitmen appear from windows, fire escapes and manholes and open fire, cars drive by, guns blazing, and sneaky assassins appear and take potshots without warning. Crime is a dangerous business, after all. "For a while we experimented with an ultra-realistic version of the game, where bullets travelled at their real speed, so you couldn't even see them, and one shot was enough to kill you," Nick explains. "But that didn't work out so we changed it back to the more traditional *RoboCop* style."

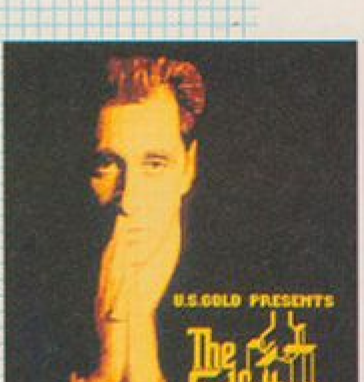
Furthermore, levels are split into smaller subsections that must be completed if you're to achieve the task set by the Don. The sub-levels are accessed by entering buildings, whereupon the action switches over to an *Operation Wolf*-

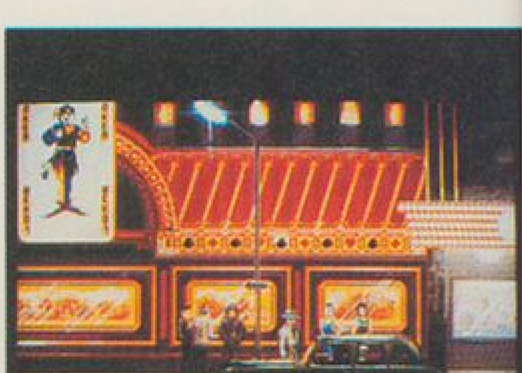


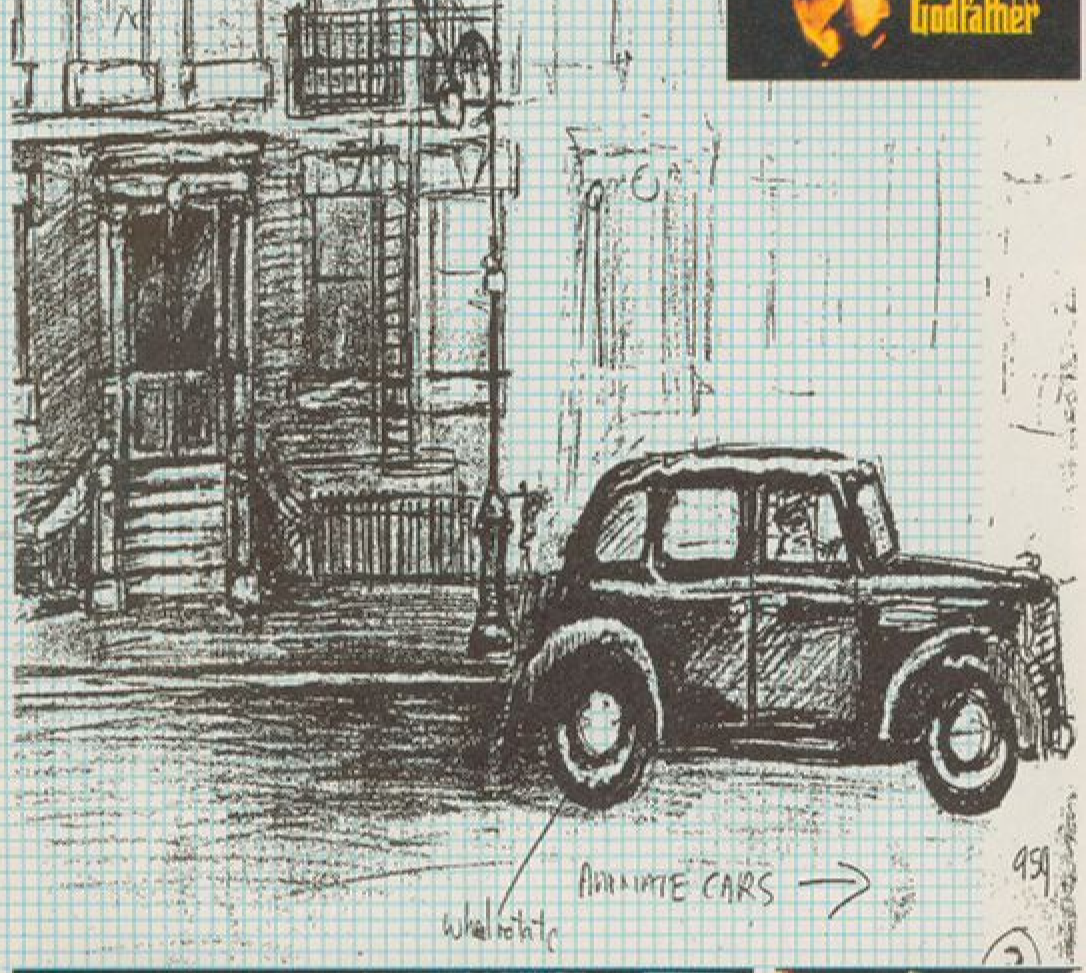
(Below) Pete Lyon's original bar-room sketch, and the final graphic backdrop as it will appear in the game. Subtle use of sepia-toning in screens like these helps to bolster the game's period atmosphere.











style shootout. Again we're on familiar gameplay ground, with gun-toting bad guys appearing from every hiding place imaginable (including behind curtains and in swivelling barber's chairs) and having to be shot down before they can open fire. In these sections your on-screen persona appears as a transparent shadow, similar to the technique seen in *Predator 2*.

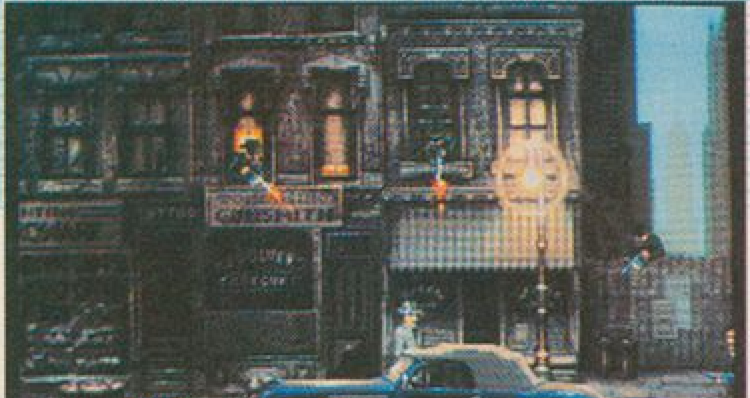
Vincent admits that converting something like *The Godfather* is a far cry from handling the usual film-licence fodder, such as *Total Recall* and Darkman. "It's a less conventional licence than most," he says. "When we started working on the game, the first thing we compared it to was *The Untouchables*. We've tried to capture the films' overall imagery and style."

That was the job of veteran graphic artist Pete Lyon, who over the years has produced the visuals for more games than most people would care to remember - it's a good bet that you've got at least one of his games in your collection. *The Godfather* is already being hailed as his best work to date - it certainly represents a radical change in style to the more realistic "period" visuals than the futuristic and fantastical variety he's produced in the past for all manner of space-based shoot 'em-ups. "One of the things that Pete said during the project was that he's enjoyed during this game more than anything to date, because it makes such a nice change from the stupid aliens he's had to do before," says Nick.

While Pete was in America earlier in the year, he used the opportunity to research his *Godfather* graphics, taking snaphots and making sketches as he wandered around New York and Las Vegas. This, in combination with film stills provided by Paramount, enabled him to knock up some very impressive and moody backdrops. So graphically-intensive is the game in fact, that it looks like the final product is going to be appearing on no less than a staggering six disks - a number previously only utilised by Readysoft's conversions of the Don Bluth laserdisc coin-ops. Don't get too worried at the prospect of all that disk accessing however - Creative is hoping to use the same "load as you play" system that it implemented in its last project, the 16-bit conversions of CapCom's *Final Fight*.

With the majority of work on *The Godfather* completed, it's now just a question of tidying things up and submitting the whole thing to a strenuous playtesting ordeal to make sure everything is fine before US Gold puts it on the shelves in November. Until then, lock up your horses and don't stop at any toll booths...

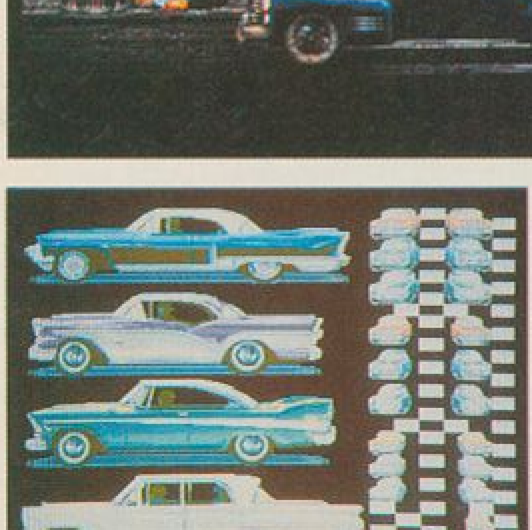
● **Gary Whitta**

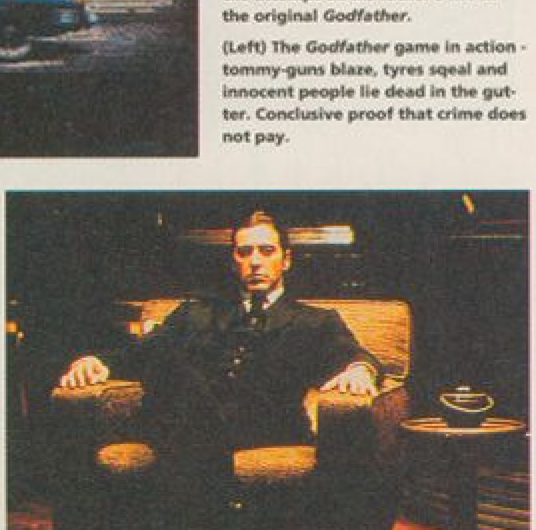


(Top) The picture of Al Pacino from *The Godfather Part III*'s promotional poster appears in the game as a title screen - it's the only digitised film image Creative were allowed to use.

(Above) Michael Corleone learns of the attempt on his father's life in the original *Godfather*.

(Left) The *Godfather* game in action - tommy-guns blaze, tyres sqeal and innocent people lie dead in the gutter. Conclusive proof that crime does not pay.





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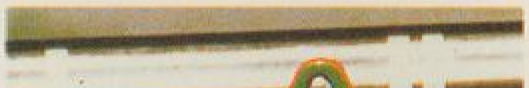
GRAND PRIX

Following his crashing smash *Stunt Car Racer* and his voyage into weirdness with *The Sentinel*, Geoff Crammond goes back to his formula one roots. ACE has some questions.



Few programmers can claim to have as clean a rap sheet as Geoff Crammond. Even the most respected authors of today's top flight games have a cruddy old cricket game or a football management disaster or an air traffic control skeleton lurking in their back catalogue cupboard. Not so for Crammond. For although his titles are relatively few and far between, numbering only six games in ten years, each has been heralded to a greater or lesser extent as a landmark. And so it is understandable that although no licence, press hype or celebrity has been attached to the product, there's still a greater than normal degree of interest in the G.C. newey.

GOLD BLEND!

Crammond has been working on *Grand Prix* since March 90. A big racing fan, he wanted to produce a game that would appeal to both a racing enthusiast who gets off on the whole grand prix scene and a more straightforward games player.

The title is pitched right in the middle between *Revs* and *Stunt Car Racer* in the Realism vs Entertainment stakes. As well as having the choice of four different skill levels, the player can choose how close he wishes to be to the feeling of driving a real car thanks to options like automatic gears, automatic braking & changedown etc. "I wanted to draw in non racing fans but at the same time hold the interest of those who know a lot about the sport".

When questioned as to the perennial popularity of the race game, Crammond is sure of a few facts. "The profile of racing games on television has increased recently, especially with the in-car camera facility. The viewer gets a real buzz from seeing the driver's point of view and let's face it, you want to get into the car and have a go, don't you? I think one of the things that motivated me on this project was the fact that I could put all the elements that I like into the game."

PRACTICE LAP

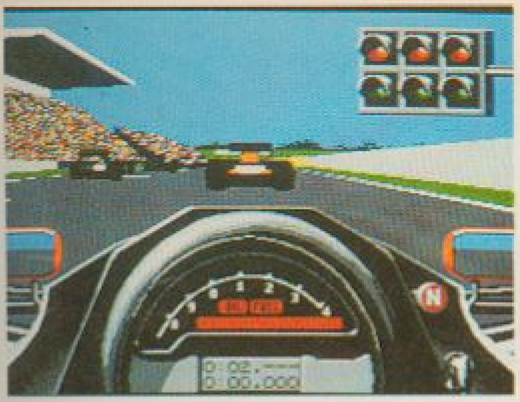
Producing *Revs* before attempting *Grand Prix* highlighted lots of problems with 3D race games but also provided the author with plenty of ideas. "There's lots of stuff that I couldn't fit into *Revs* which I have managed to work in here. Real pit stops, more realistic graphics, better scenery, more intelligent opposition, trackside marshalls," says Crammond, "I got some good experience with *Revs*, and have been able to build on it. I also sorted out the computerized car behaviour. In *Revs* the cars tended to behave rather simply, but now they work in a completely different way. They skid and spin and even take the best lines!

"With *Revs* on the BBC, memory was a constant strain. The Amiga and ST obviously have the facility to store more code, perform more multiplications and therefore produce a better game."

However, even with the luxury of such comparably enormous pages of available memory afforded by the Amiga and ST, space is still a problem. It's still uncertain whether all the features planned will be incorporated.

THE INDY FACTOR

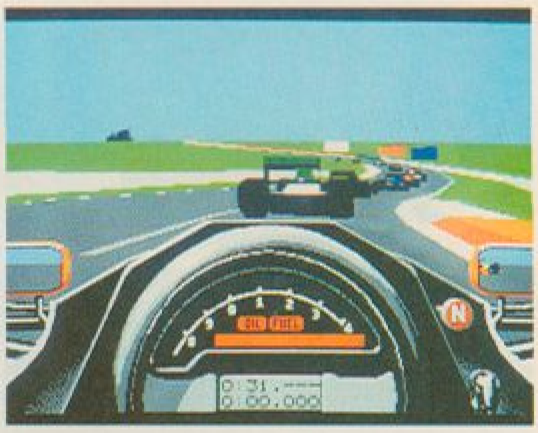
An understandable concern for both Geoff and Microprose was that *Indianapolis 500* from Electronic Arts is still regarded as the finest race game around, and its plentiful supply of features, camera angles, crashes and smashes, would make it very hard to beat for sheer spectacle. Although the game appeared well over a year ago, it's worth remembering that it came out immediately after Crammond began work on *Grand Prix*. "I was suitably impressed when I saw

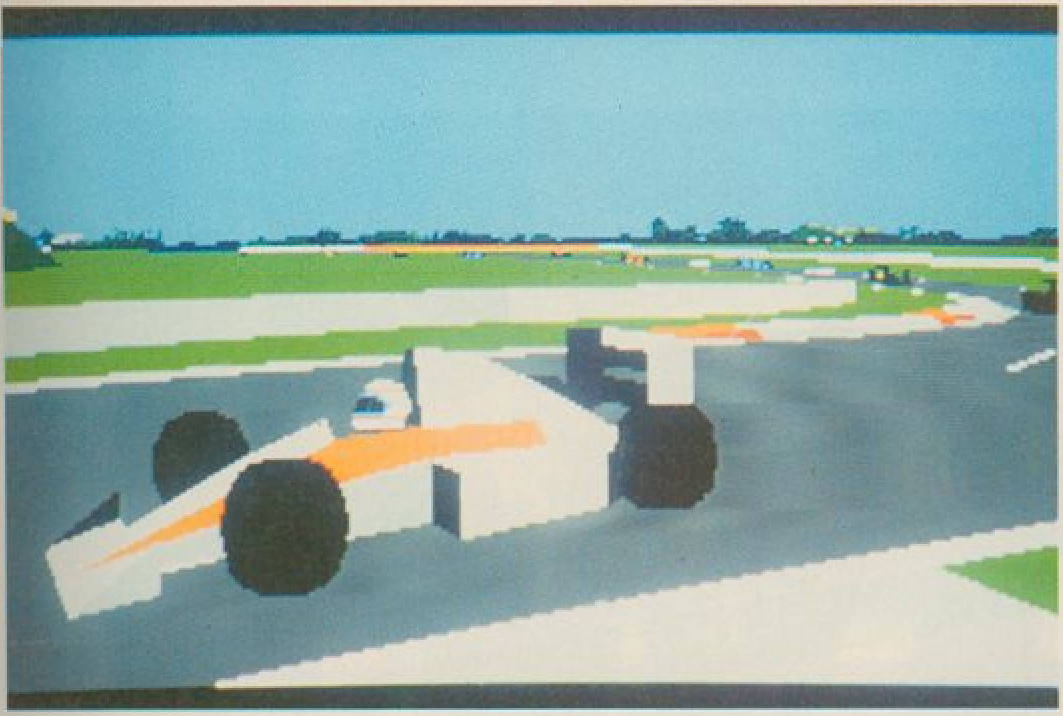


(Left) On the Grid. Crammond's main concern was to maintain a constant frame-update even in graphically intense situations.

(Below) The behaviour of the cars, as well as their look has been accurately modelled on real vehicles and drivers' abilities.

(Right) "The driver's p.o.v. is the most exciting element of any race game," claims Geoff.





The Fine Games of Geoff Crammond

Although he can hardly be called the most prolific software author of the time, Crammond, unlike many of his contemporaries scores 100% in the "No Turkeys" stakes. Let's look through the wobbly lens and step back, just like Kylie suggests, in time.

Super Invaders - Acornsoft BBC Micro

Colourful invaders work their way down the screen in homage to the arcade classic. The player trundles along the bottom of the screen in a blue tank firing upwards. Complete with towers, UFOs, bug-eyed invaders and pretty good sound too, Super Invaders was a vital title for any BBC owner's catalogue.

Aviator - Acornsoft BBC Micro

Realistic, monochrome and that hard! Aspiring Spitfire pilots simply lapped up this ultra-realistic flight simulator that was so realistic that few people could actually get the bleeding plane airborne. For those willing to invest the effort, however, some exhilarating combat was available too, although the whole affair was a little heavyweight for some tastes.

Revs - Acornsoft BBC Micro

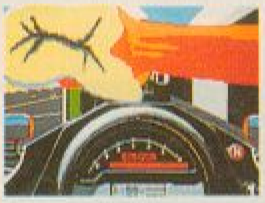
Aviator on wheels. In many respects the forerunner of Grand Prix, for its time (consider it was before Hard Driving) this was a pretty revolutionary game. Accurate race simulation with more monochrome graphics. Again, for all its realism, Revs received some crit for simply being too tricky for the beginner.

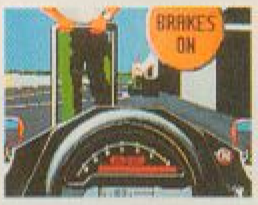
The Sentinel - Firebird

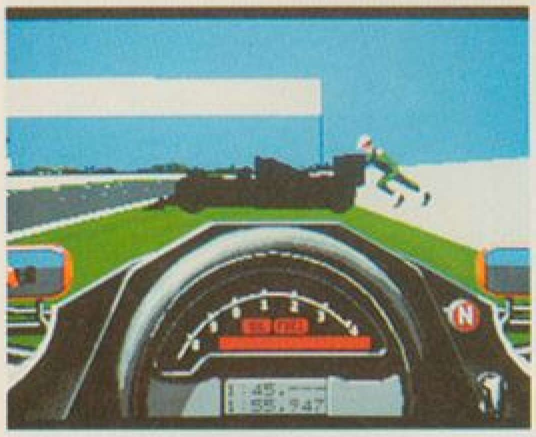
Almost defies description. Teleport yourself around a polygon landscape, absorbing objects and creating other versions of yourself, moving up and down on the vertical plane, eventually endeavouring to absorb your opponent, the Sentinel and thus moving onto a new area. Uh-huh.

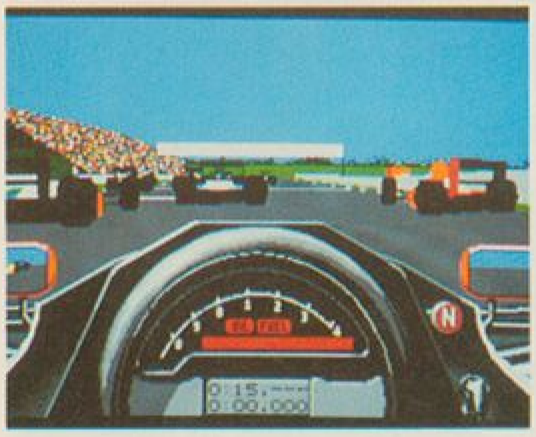
Stunt Car Racer - *MicroStyle*

Guide the hottest of hot rods around a selection of precariously narrow suspended raceways in a life'n'death struggle with either a computer or human controlled opponent. Argued by many to be the finest no-nonsense crash'n'smash race game, for sheer airborne laughs and outrageous crashes, Stunt Car Racer wins the day.









(Top right and left) In the Pits - one of the sections that Crammond says he's most pleased with.

(Middle) Background features like the grandstand can be toggled on or off at any time to enhance the frame update.

(Above) Automatic braking is just one of the options. Not much use here on the grid, but it's in there.

it," he says, "and I knew that my game had to be better."

Indeed, if the less than fascinating oval bowl of Indianapolis failed to grip the imagination, Grand Prix's 16 international racetracks, all accurately modelled on the real thing, allowing the player to race a whole season should wow the crowds by comparison.

ON THE GRID

Although at this stage the whole game can be safely described as seriously classy, there are a couple of elements which Geoff is especially pleased with. "If I had to pull out one thing that was both the most tricky and I'm most pleased with, it's got to be the artificial intelligence and tactics of the other drivers.

"The speed and detail of the cars is also quite an achievement. The problem was that there is always a potential, when going around corners and at the start on the grid, to have a huge number of cars on screen all at once. It was important that the whole game didn't slow down at these points.

"The pit stop and pitlane crew I'm equally pleased with. I knew the effect I was after and spend a long time working out how to achieve it. They were planned in from day one, but I can't tell you how they work. It's a trade secret!

While the speed of the game is impressive to say the least, some players may crave an even faster frame update. To facilitate this, the detail level can be determined by the player, killing background effects like the grandstands etc. While it was decided to give this option to the real speed freaks, Geoff still thinks details like these are important. They add a lot of atmosphere.

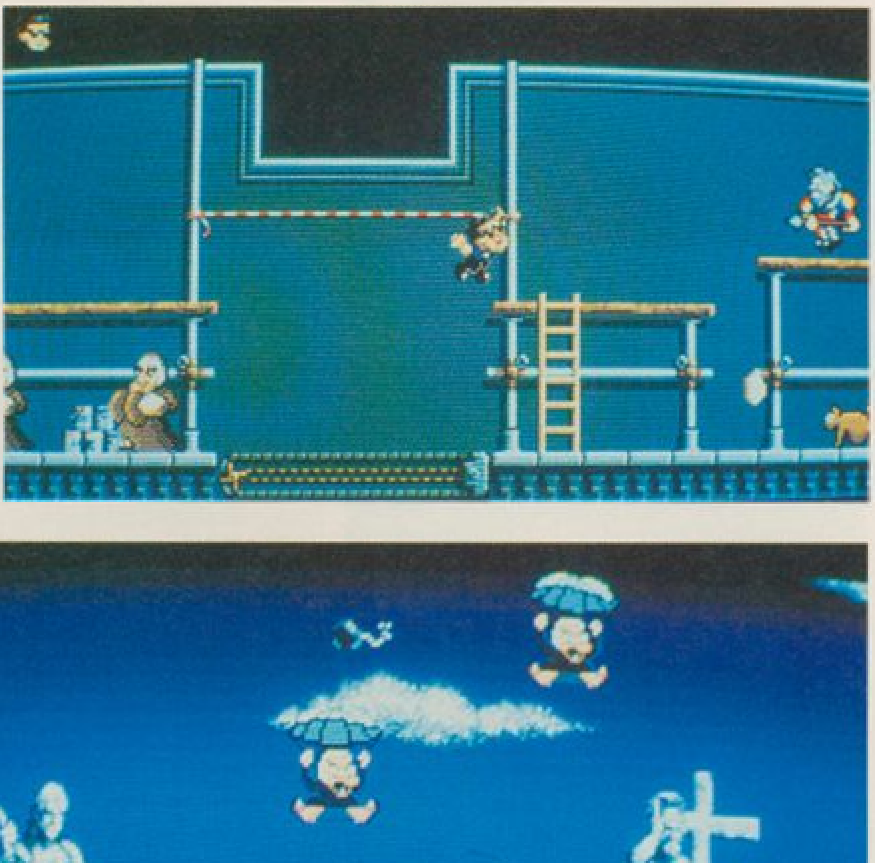
The race tracks, performance of other drivers and their lap times have all been based on 1991 season details. And the information is continually being updated to incorporate new results. Even the new track at Barcelona which won't be used until September will be included into the game. The team managed to obtain blueprints for the circuit and reckon that once it's all together, they'll have two days before the title has to be completed to include the best lap times for that circuit.

It's this sort of detail which made games like Revs and Aviator almost legendary, except this time it seems as if the detail is going hand in hand with the playability, rather than encroaching on it.

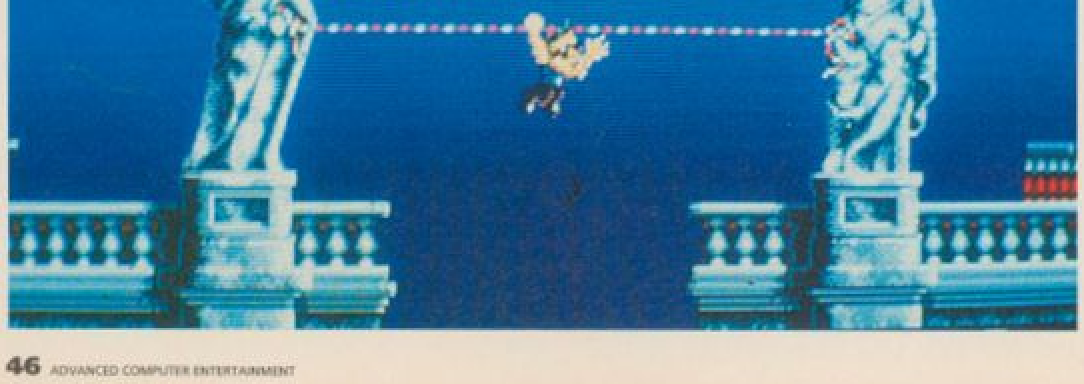
●Jim Douglas

Panned by the critics, slaughtered at the box office, Bruce Willis' beleaguered personal opus may have one saving grace courtesy of OCEAN and Special FX. ACE finds out more...

HUDSON HAWK



(Right) Oh, would you like to swing on a star... More shimmying, this time in the basement of the Vatican, for story reasons which are too intricate to explain here. Note the rather well-endowed nuns.

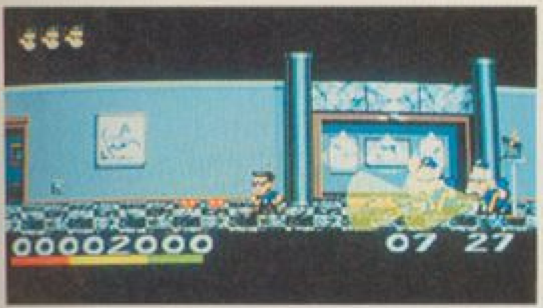


(Below) Carry moonbeams home in a jar... Bruce shimmies from building to building, just like he does in the film, in *Hudson Hawk*.

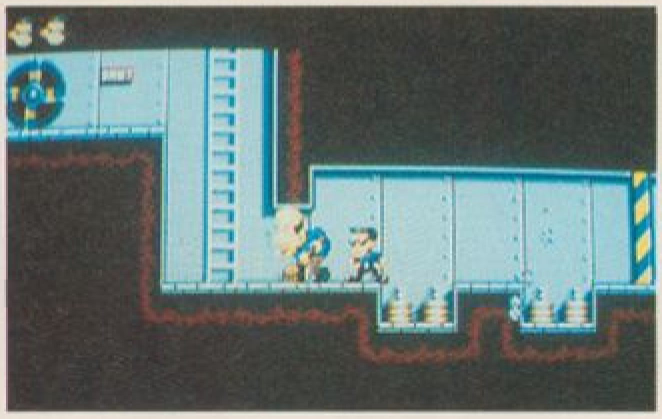
Poor old Bruce. During all his time as a struggling actor, and later as a cinematic superstar, the thinning action man fought to get his idea, conceived ten years previously, made into a movie. He wheeled and dealed and wined and dined his way around tinseltown to get it made, then finally it all came true, with 20th Century Fox lavishing $40 million on the project in the hope that it would be the big summer blockbuster. And what happens? It turns into the biggest fall-over-and-die flop since *Howard The Duck*. None of the critics had a good word to say about *Hudson Hawk*, and you could hear the sounds of crickets chirping in the cinemas it played in. Poor old Ocean, of course, got stuck with a bit of a turkey of a licence as a result, but now it looks as though the game itself may still come up trumps - and on its own merit for once.

Liverpool-based development team Special FX, who are putting *Hudson Hawk* together, have been responsible for the majority of Ocean's more successful licences in the past, including *The Untouchables*, *Batman* and, most recently, *RoboCop 2*. *Hudson Hawk*, however, represents something of a departure for them. Gone are the large, intricately detailed characters and sprawling backdrops in favour of a more simplistic 'consoley' approach. All the characters, including Bruce himself, are cutesy japanese-style sprites in the *Mario* vein. "The main game design came from the script, which we saw in January," says Special FXer Ivan Davis, "We envisioned the film as sort of a *James Bond* spoof, so we went for this cartoony approach to the game."

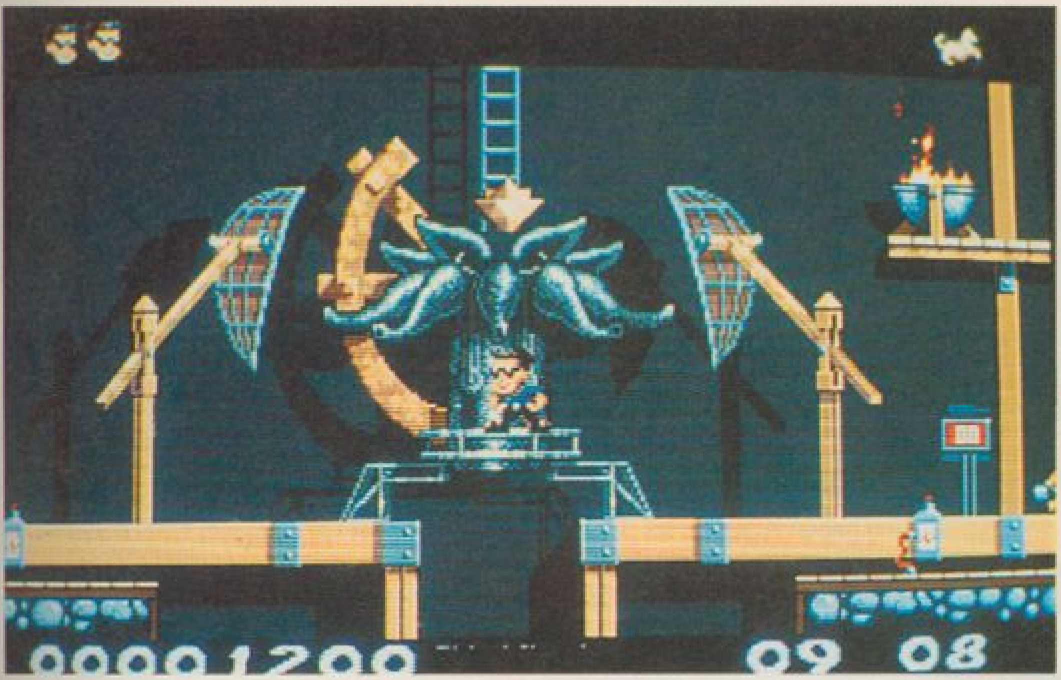
Another reason for *Hudson Hawk*'s undoubtedly consoley feel is the fact that Special FX is also

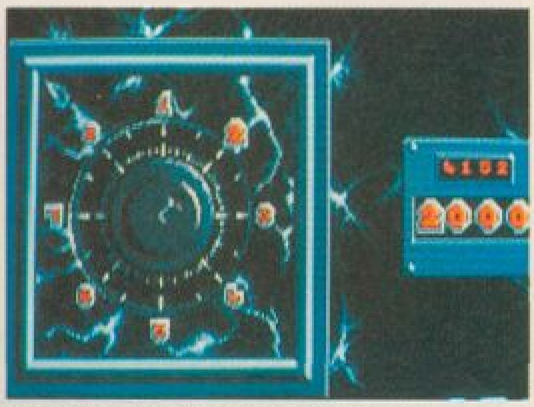


Or are you better off as you are... Look out Bruce! Two doddery security guards are on the prowl in the art gallery armed with flashlights, and if he's not careful he'll be pinched by the fuzz. Note the horsey motifs around the screen which lend some clue as to the object you're after.



(Left) Or would you rather be a pig... Like *Switchblade*, *Hudson Hawk*'s playing area often gets very cramped, with new areas not revealing themselves until you've actually entered them.

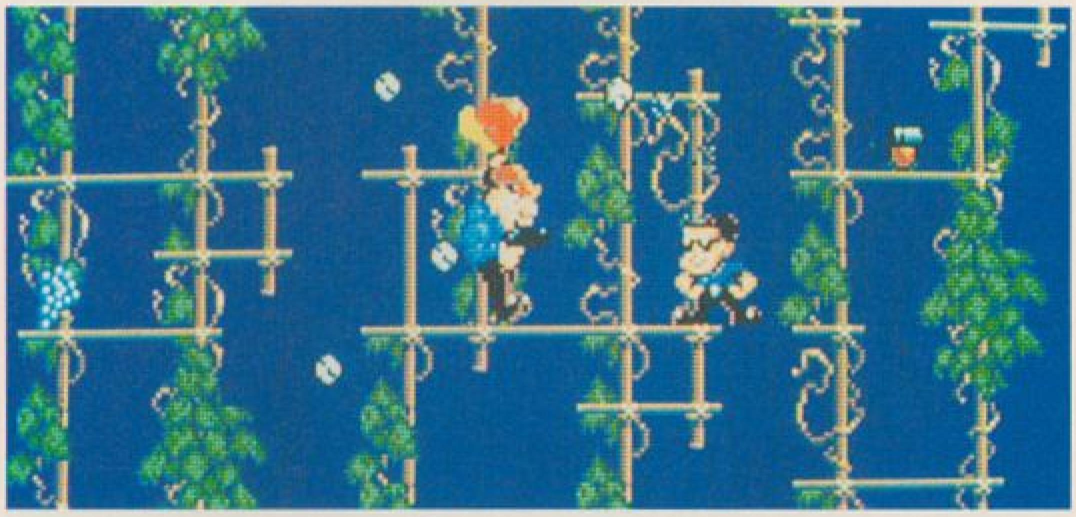




(Above) But we're walking along... The safe-cracking sub-game tests your reactions and dexterity to the limit. Here goes his funny bone...

(Left) Singing our song... The fabled alchemy machine in all its splendour.

(Below) Side by side... Later levels are more platform-orientated, as this rather surreal chase up a bamboo trellis demonstrates. This was definitely NOT in the film.



producing the NES and GameBoy versions, and the game is more or less the same across all the formats. In classic console tradition, *Hudson Hawk* is a platform-based affair that bears more than a passing resemblance to the Japan-inspired *Rick Dangerous* and *Switchblade*. The player is cast as reluctant cat burglar Eddie Hawkins - if you didn't see the film (and there are probably quite a lot of you), the story revolves around said burglar Hawkins (AKA the Hudson Hawk) who's been brought out of retirement to steal three parts of Leonardo Da Vinci's made-up-for-the-movie alchemy machine for a pair of evil crimelords who plan to make billions out of pressing their own gold. Obviously it's the robberies themselves, which provide the movie with the bulk of its action, that form the tasks in the game. The player has to sneak his way through twelve levels in order to swipe the three precious objects - a horse statue, a crystal and the codex, Da Vinci's famous notebook.

As is typical for a 'cute' game of this type, the characters are all fairly stereotypical - Bruce always looks cool in his black burgling threads and sunglasses (and his bald patch has been thoughtfully covered up), and the main threat comes in the form of fat bungling security guards and various rough villain types, who are worked into the movie via an unbelievably-contrived sub-plot. Here though, it all helps add to the comic-book feel that Special FX have been aiming for.

Although *Hudson Hawk* is probably the least literal translation of a movie for quite a while, the essence of the film has been captured through various gameplay elements - for example, the player must often crawl or be otherwise acrobatic in order to avoid laser alarms that could trip you up, and shin from building to building on highwires. There are also plenty of diverse puzzle elements, such as the use of baseballs (which Bruce is, for some inexplicable reason, armed with) to set off pressure pads that open doors, throw switches and so on. There's also the ubiquitous puzzle sub-section, which takes the form of a simple reaction test - a safe lock rotates at speed, and the trick is to stop the dial at each number of the four-figure combination. *The correct figure has to be hit four times* consecutively in order to crack the safe. One slip-up and it's back to square one.

The boys at Special FX deny that the movie's lack of critical or financial success has put them off - in fact, only a couple of team have to date seen the film, as numerous attempts to go and see it as a group went wrong. But when you've got licenced games as good as this looks to be shaping up, who needs the film?

● **Gary Whitta**

Virtual Destructi

This month - Virtual Reality strikes again, this time in London's trendy Rock Garden and TV's *Crystal Maze* goes all computer controlled in Blackpool.

4
VIRTUALITY

VIRTUALITY

(Top) Get down! Happining gamers enjoy the earth-shaking VR experience.
(Above) The Machine.
(Right) You too could look as stylish as this for only £1 per go.

When the Media gets its mitts into something it considers to be sexy, my goodness, don't they hold on like a Pit Bull on amphetamines? Ever since Virtual Reality hit the glossy mags late last year, the press, TV and even Radio has gone potty trying to work out exactly what is going on with this thing where, supposedly, you put on a funny helmet in order to get something like an acid trip.

To add fuel to the fire, there are a whole bevy of pseudo academics hovering round on the fringe of the VR scene, spying a whizz bang opportunity for a quick killing. Thus, there are people that have got grants from scientific authorities for studying things like the Anthropology of Virtual Reality. "Virtual Reality as Shamanism" - was the title of a paper I read recently. Sixties guru Timothy Leary has been resurrected to certify how cool and groovy VR is gonna be. Cognitive Psychologists everywhere walk around dreamy eyed, thinking that VR will herald some kind of New Age of Cosmic Awareness.

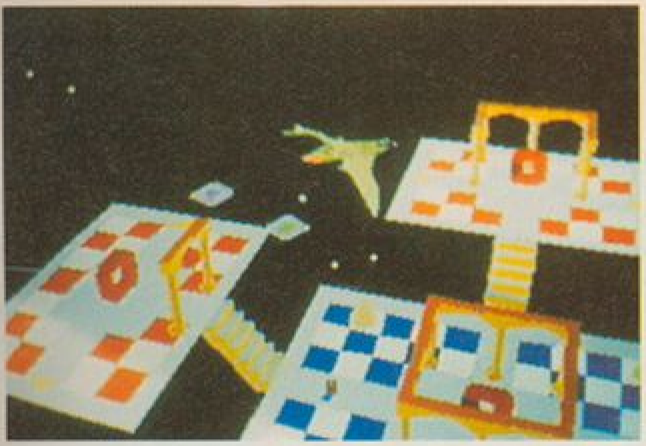
Well, who knows where the Age of Aquarius really will consist of people wandering around in headsets, but for the moment the fact is that there is only one VR application that command pubic domain support - and therefore make money - and that is Games!

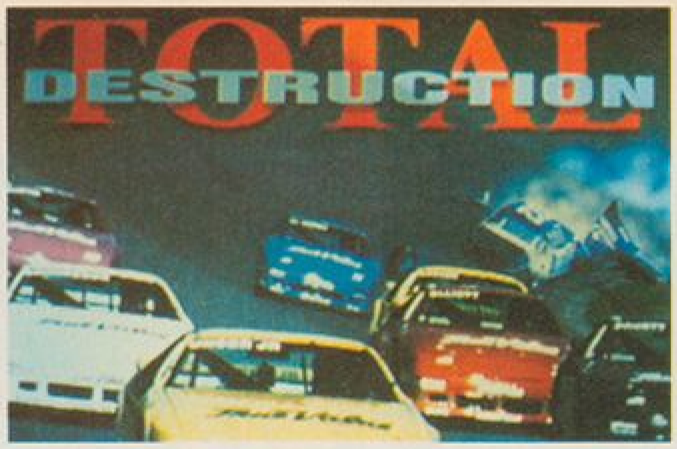
And what is the only company in the world that true VR games out there in the market right now? Good old 100% British, W Industries - recently in another flurry of activity with the launch of two new products.

First of all, there's the new 1000CS, the so-called *Cyberspace* machine, which has the Player wearing the familiar headset, standing in a raised pulpit type of thing, using a Space Joystick a control. Space Joystick? Well, this is a joystick with two fire buttons that is tracked by the system. So put it up in front of your helmet and you see - well, whatever the program wants you to see - in this case a meaty looking gun.

The first game, or Experience as they like to call it, is called *Nightmare* and has you shooting it out with another human player in, "a surreal mosaic of graphics and sound." Surreal is certainly the word, as it looks as if you are in the middle of a *Star Trek* chess board floating in Space - only you are of the pieces!

You move around this environment by pointing





(Far Left) The Crystal Maze, players must negotiate weird worlds in the search of exciting treasure-gaining scenarios.

(Left) Total Destruction promises to add more of an edge to the slightly sanitized feel of many VR games with more crashin', bashin' and smashin' that ever before!

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in the desired direction of travel and pressing one of the fire buttons. The other fires your gun, which rather than being a laser sort of thing, is more like a grenade launcher, with the projectile having a sightly parabolic trajectory.

The scene is filled with arches and weird sculpture and you make your way through the playfield, alert for the presence of the other player. You both have the same aim - to try and shoot the other player as often as possible in the time allowed (about 3.5 minutes). When you do zap another player, they explode into millions of bits and reform in another part of the playfield.

Extra spice is dished up in the form of a Birdie - a gigantic green Pteradactyl who takes it upon himself to attack you from time to time. When he's feeling peckish, a deep resonant voice speaks out, "Birdie's Hungry!" When you hear, "Birdie's Coming!" it's time to panic and look wildly around - in an attempt to shoot him out of the sky before he picks you up, crunches your bones and drops you back onto the playfield from a great height.

Great sound effects, topped off with spooky CD music puts *Nightmare* in the "Must Play" category for any exponent of Advanced Computer Entertainment. One of the best two player games ever,get thee to the Rock Garden, in Convent Garden Piazza, London, England, ASAP - although at £3 a throw, beating your friends over the head with a blunt instrument does have the attraction of being lot cheaper.

Meanwhile in another part of the Nation's Capital, more things VR are afoot with the opening of what is claimed to be the World's First Virtual Reality Simulation Centre. Golly! In the basement of Piccadilly Circus's main tourist trap, The Trocadero, the Simulation Centre consists of four modified *1000SD* units - W Industries sit down unit.

Gone are the two joysticks either side of you, the punter - now there is a hinged cockpit that ends up cover the from of the whole unit, with a steering wheel on it, two pedals are on the floor and there's a gear shift on the left. Are we talking about a driving game, or what?

Actually we are talking about is *Total Destruction*, which is a driving game where you truck around a triple figure eight circuit (complete with flying ramp leap) along with up to three other human players and four other Computer Controlled cars.

Soon bits of body panel litter the track, but if you get a bit too liberal with the panel beating you find yourself transported into a view outside of your car and watching it blasted into its component atoms and then reconstructed before your very eyes. You are then plonked back into the driving seat, and away you go!

Control of the car is good, realistic without being too sensitive - and all the while that the race is on, there's a running commentary to keep you informed of the action, plus the usual heady brew of effects and CD music.

Although *Total Destruction* is primarily a race game - the nice thing about it is that it still gives you, the player, complete freedom while the race is on. So if you are limping along in last position, with no hope of winning - but you hear via the commentary that your best friend is in first - what do you do? Honour insists that you make your way across the track on the grass, to find the sucker and blow him to little bits!

Alternatively, there's nothing like coming into the closing straight and seeing another player driving in the opposite direction, straight at you, to concentrate the mind.

The Centre itself is going great business and while you're queuing to get on, not only do you get to watch monitors that show you the viewpoint of each player, but also two screens that show the best of the action from around the racetrack.

Best played with a few friends, *Total Destruction* is another milestone for Advanced Computer Gaming. And while your visiting the Troc, don't forget there's what is probably the UK's best arcade up on the top floor as well. But take along a lot of dosh!

CRYSTAL MAZE

Ever seen the quiz program *Crystal Maze* on Channel 4. Hosted by professional weirdo Richard O'Brien, it has teams of yuppies rushing around a set doing silly games - not my cup of chilled vodka, but up to 4 million tune in to hoot at the antics on a regular basis.

Now you can aspire to doing very much the same thing, if you're willing to travel to the Sand Castle on the South Shore of Blackpool Pleasure Beach, controlled by rather a clever computer system.

This *Crystal Maze* is a computer moderated rabbit warren of three of the four zones found in the TV program, Aztec, Future and Medieval, where the games are a combination of physical tasks and computer game skills. Unexpectedly, industry veterans Level 9 - better known for straightforward adventure games - were behind the game programming side of things.

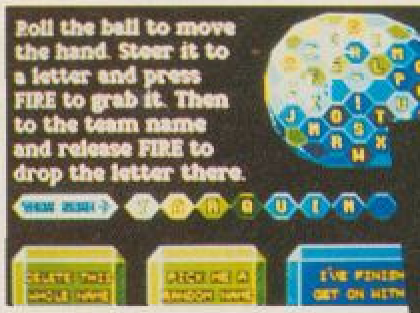
After paying your dosh - minimum of two needed for a team, you're given a credit card thing which will control the rest of your game. You log onto the system by the control centre - and once you've done this, the clock is running!

The system directs to one of the games in the complex with a cryptic clue and off you and your team must go to search for it. Having located the relevant monitor, which will be displaying a welcome screen, you insert your card in a reader and get on with playing the game. Some of these are variations of old computer favourites, other are more imaginative - like the one where one of you is at the top of a ladder controlling a trakball to the instructions of the other, who's looking at a monitor down at the bottom.

You have to finish the game within a time limit or you loose a crystal, just like in the real thing. Finish the game and you get a crystal, which allow you more time in the Dome at the conclusion of the proceedings.

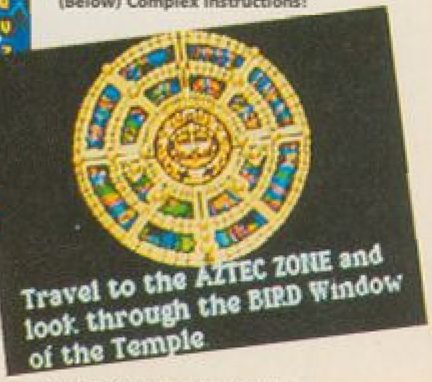
So, you rush from game to game - through the exquisitely themed set - and end up with a number of crystals. You then go to the dome, which has a myriad of buttons on the inside. They light up from time to time - some are crystals which you must push to score, some are skulls, which looses you score. You go bananas trying to hit as many crystals as possible and if you get more than 40, you win a prize....ours was a free drink in MacDonalds down the road!

Cyberdome, the company that run the place, call it fun for all the family - and it's certainly something different and makes a refreshing change from zapping aliens. If you're around Blackpool, try it!

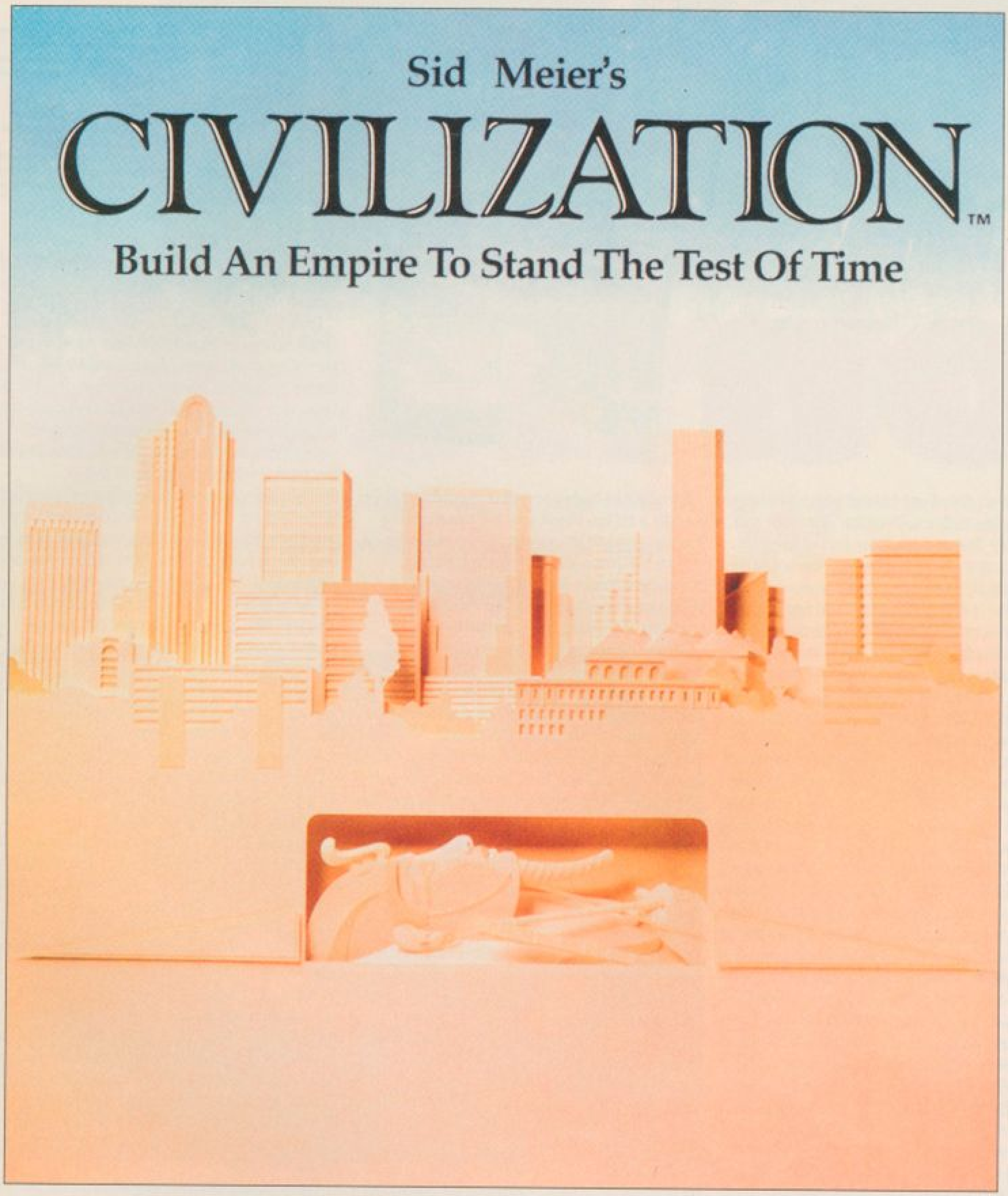


Roll the ball to move the hand. Steer it to a letter and press FIRE to grab it. Then to the team name and release FIRE to drop the letter there.

(Left) No, not a fiendish puzzle, this is just where you type in your name.
(Below) Complex instructions!



Travel to the AZTEC ZONE and look through the BIRD Window of the Temple



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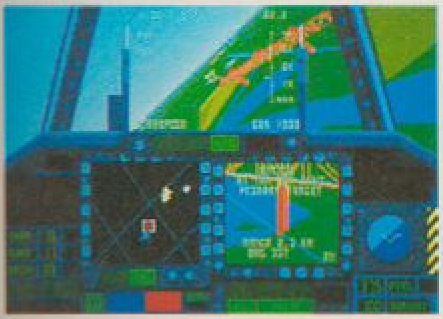
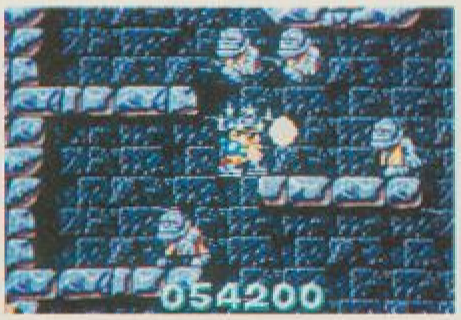
SCREEN TEST



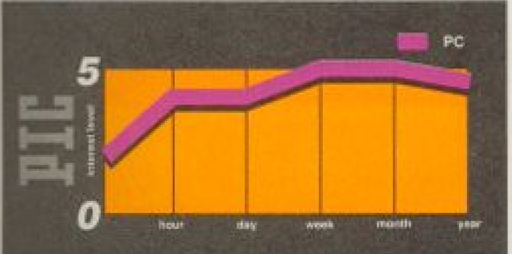
F-117A: Stealth Fighter 2. MicroProse.come up with another finest-class flight sim. But is it worth buying if you've got *F-19*? Turn to page 52 to find out...



Will *Magic Pockets* from Renegade have you delving deep into the dusty depths of *your* pockets to find the cash to buy it? Page 60 will help you decide...

THE BEST IS YET TO BE

As you will have no doubt read by now, ACE reviews are changing, metamorphosing into THE definitive guide to modern advanced computer entertainment. But, you cry, they already ARE! And indeed, dearest reader, you are correct. But regular readers should know by now that ACE is never a magazine to rest on its laurels. The best is yet to be. The ACE Screentest is dead, long live the ACE Screentest!



The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve* – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

- Lots of cutesy characters
- Fascinating 3D sections.
- The two player link-up option for stage 16

- Twelve disks to swap!
- No colour on some stages
- No joystick or mouse control

We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!

ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended without hesitation.

Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.

One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.

Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

THE LINE UP

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71 **JAMES 'BUSTER' DOUGLAS BOXING** *Sega*
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76 **THE SIMPSONS** *Ocean*
78 **AFTERBURNER 2** *Sega*
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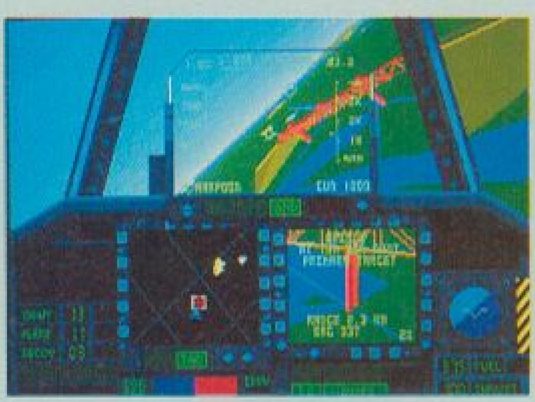
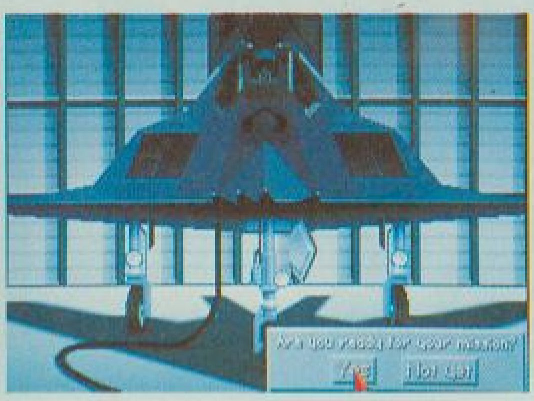
F-117A STEALTH FIGHTER 2

The F-117A Stealth Fighter may be able to sneak past radar, but nothing evades our highly-powered review scanners. ACE locks onto MICROPROSE's sequel to its '89 top hit.




Are you ready for your mission?

It's not an easy time to be a would-be flight sim purchaser. The last few months have seen a wealth of top-notch sims, such as US Gold's *Jetfighter II* and EA's *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, appear on the PC software shelves. And MicroProse's *F-117A* is not going to make an already tough purchasing decision any easier, because it's a little cracker.

IN THE COCKPIT

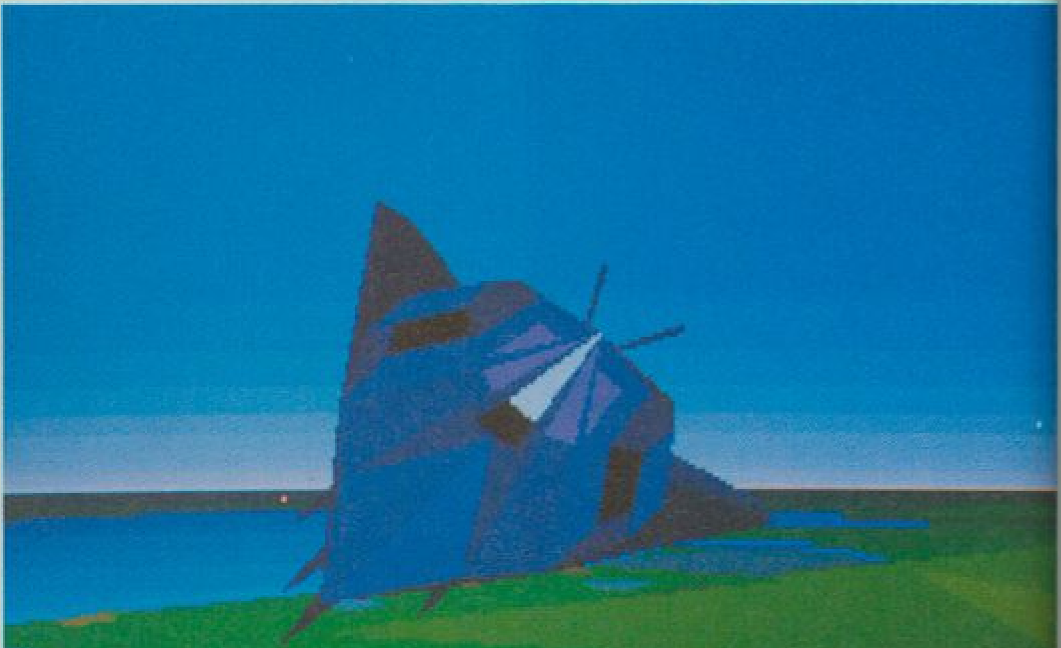
Even if *F-117A* came in a black feature-less box, you'd be able to tell it was a MicroProse product. Open the box and out tumbles a weighty slab of manual, a selection of handy keyboard overlays and enough back-up material to fill about fifty ring binders. Some may find it a little over-the-top, but it certainly helps reaffirm the impression you always get from MicroProse games: that you're getting the best and most accurate simulation technically possible for your computer.

Once past the familiar plane-indentification copy protection you're into the game proper. The intro sequence and menu screens are all drawn in a clean, polished style befitting *F-117A*'s hi-tech milieu. Choosing an artistic style appropriate to the game in hand is vital if the correct atmosphere is to be generated. Compare *F-117A*'s graphics with the grittier style found in MicroProse's *Gunship 2000* and its battlefield setting.

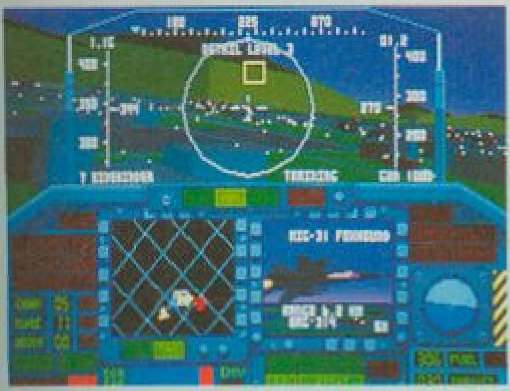
Anyone who has played *F-19* will be familiar with *F-117A*'s wealth of menu options. The player can take the reigns of one of the preset pilots or log on under a new name and build up their own flight history. Various difficulty parameters can be adjusted, including opponent quality, how realistic (and hence difficult) landings are and even whether the program will let you crash or not (the perfect option for learners).

As in the prequel there are three 'War' settings: Cold War; Limited War; and Conventional War. These subtly affect the manner in which the game is played: in a Cold War setting the aim is to try and complete your missions without arousing enemy activity, while the Conventional War setting permits more gungho shoot-them-first gameplay.

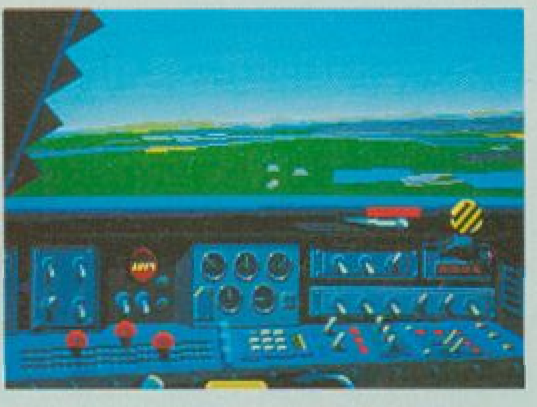
Perhaps the most controversial option (at least as far as sim purists are concerned) is the one that allows you to choose between flying a 'Microprose' *F-117A* and the official Lockheed Stealth Fighter. The difference is in the payload;



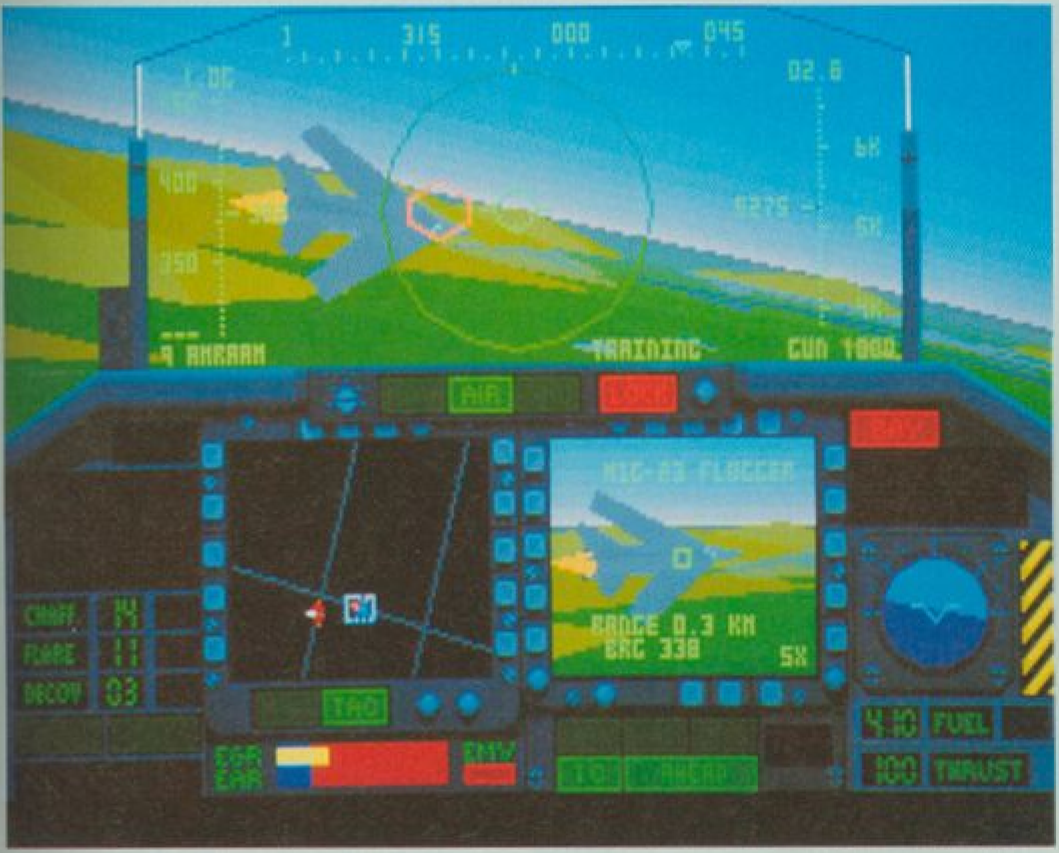
Compared to some other flight sims, *F-117A* is distinctly underpowered in the out-of-cockpit view department. There's a 'Slot View' (a trailing camera that never tilts horizontally), 'Chase-Plane View' (familiar enough) and a 'Side-On View'. By flipping the Fighter about it's possible to get an all-round look, but it's not really the ideal method.



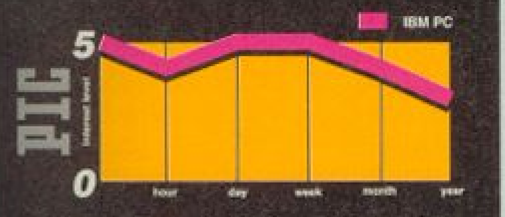
Being a Stealth Fighter game, most of the missions takes place at night - note how all the buildings are lit up by tiny lights. If you feel up to it, you can fly slalom around the buildings!



As is now standard on all the best flight sims, the pilot can rotate his or her head to look around the cockpit and scan for the enemy.



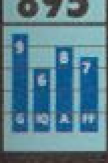
Fire! Fire! A Mig-23 'Flogger' buzzes you. Your Mavericks are already locked on (hence the tracking-camera shot of the 'plane inset on your cockpit) so just hit fire to blow it to kingdom come.



As with any MicroProse product, first impressions are excellent - they always convey a feeling of 'completeness' that other sims rarely achieve. Keyboard overlays, help sheets and seemingly infinite difficulty variables make it easy for the novice pilot to get a handle on the action, while seasoned air jockeys can wallow in MicroProse's legendary accuracy and attention to detail to their heart's content. Top quality. High class.

ACE RATING

895



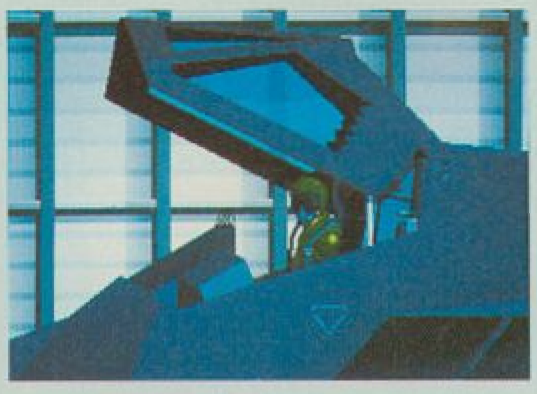
IBM PC

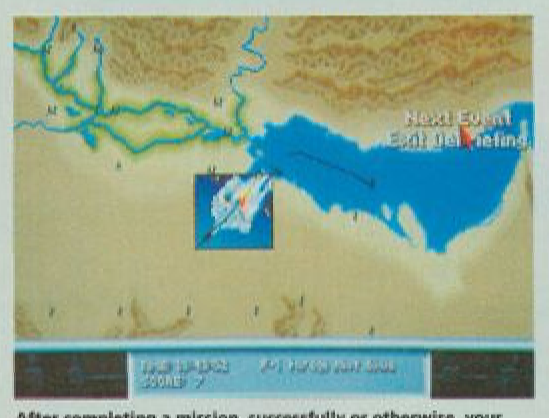
Those armed with a megafast VGA PC will be able to revel in some of the most detailed and complex polygon 3D yet seen, while the four lower-detail settings allow players with less well-endowed machines to compromise between sight-seeing and smoothness. Sound is good, even on the basic PC, but with a Roland or Ad-Lib soundboard it's incredible.

There's no denying that *F-117A* is a superb flight sim, and MicroProse's best yet. However, despite the radically overhauled graphics and increased number of combat arenas, one does wonder whether there's enough new in the gameplay to make it a vital purchase to owners of the original *F-19*.

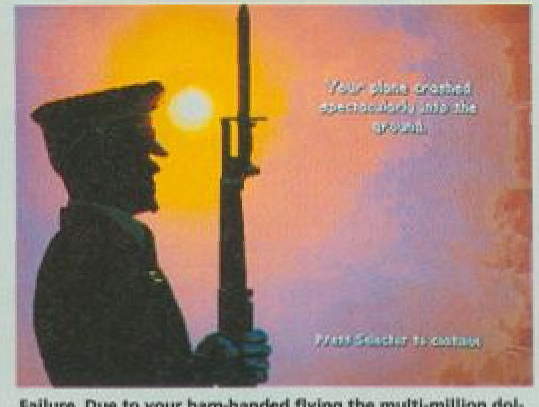
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	Under Consideration
ATARI ST	Under Consideration
IBM PC	£39.99 Early October





After completing a mission, successfully or otherwise, your Mission Commander gives you a full debriefing. Your recorded flight path over the combat arena is played back and your various combat actions detailed in embarassing detail


Your plane crashed spectacularly into the ground.
Press Selector to continue

Failure. Due to your ham-handed flying the multi-million dollar Stealth Fighter has ended up digging a gole somewhere in the middle of Scandinavia. Cue 'The Last Post' and lots of grieving black-clad relatives.

the 'real' F-117A has just two weapons bays, but MicroProse's has four, allowing for more action-packed play.

FIELD DRESSING

The number of combat arenas has been radically increased. Now the player can select missions from any one of nine battlefields, including all those from the original *F-19* and *F-15 2* plus a couple of new ones. The missions are pseudo-randomly generated, so the total number possible is practically infinite. Keen followers of the Gulf War may be interested to know that some of the Persian Gulf scenarios are closely based on those flown by Stealth Fighters in Operation Desert Storm.

The player can enter any Theatre of War and choose or decline to go on any of the missions on offer at will. To help in making the decision the player can review all the mission data, study the placement and ranges of the various radar and enemy units in the area. Having chosen a mission the player enters the armoury.

The player will find the plane already loaded with an arsenal suitable to the mission in hand as chosen by the computer. Generally the computer knows best, but you can chop and change the preset payload with any of the twenty-plus weapons on offer.

AIRY FAIRY

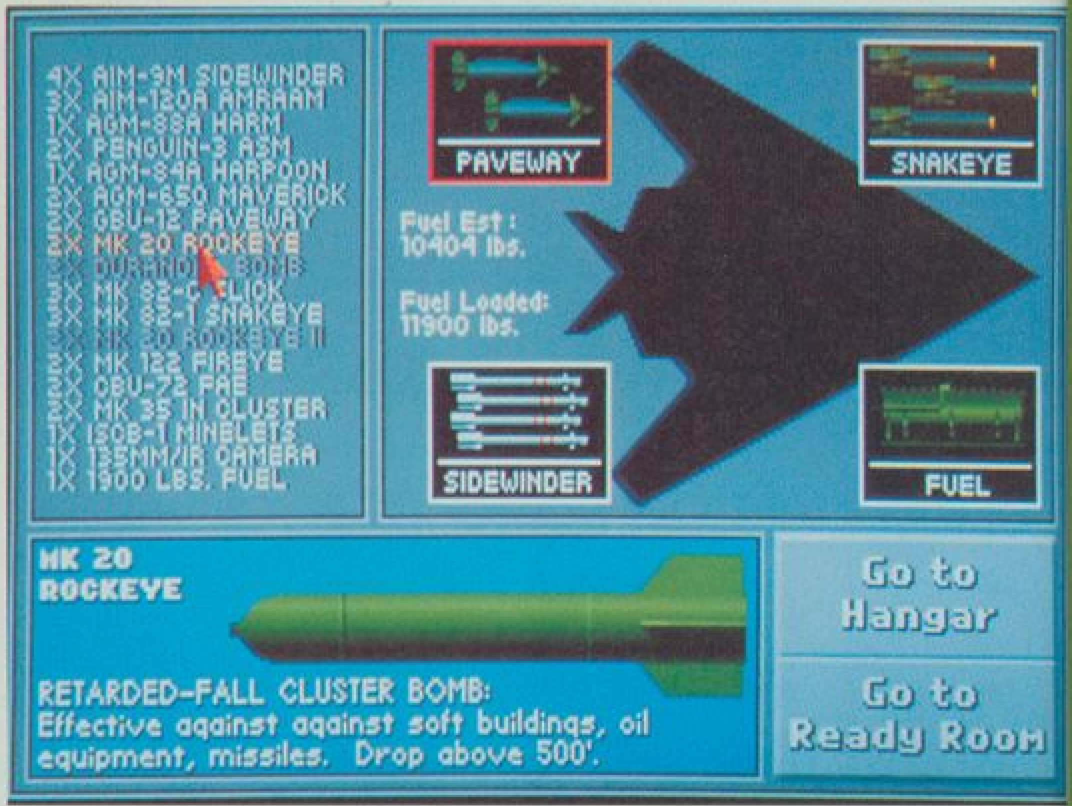
At last, it's into the air, and this is where players with VGA boards will really begin to notice the difference between *F-19* and *F-117A*. Taking advantage of the latest in top-speed 3D technology, *F-117A*'s incredible graphics are a far cry from the basic polygons of the original *F-19*.

The full 256-colour VGA palette has been used to stunning effect, with graduated horizons and landscapes. The object complexity is remarkable - just fly past an aircraft carrier (complete with planes on the deck) and see what I mean.

Naturally there are some drawbacks; even on a 20MHz 386-based PC the update is a tad jerky. Fortunately there are four detail levels, and naturally the lower the detail, the smoother the ride. At the lowest detail setting (which is still pretty damn impressive) the game zips along at a blistering speed.

The *F-117A* controls are near-identical to the original's, even the keyboard overlays are interchangeable! The missions are generally 'get in, destroy the objectives and get out' affairs, with dog-fighting (ideally) kept to a minimum.

The *F-117A* was not designed to face off against a horde of Mig-23s (mainly because it ☞



4X AIM-9M SIDEWINDER
3X AIM-120A AMRAAM
1X AGM-88A HARM
2X PENGUIN-3 ASM
1X AGM-84A HARPOON
2X AGM-65D MAVERICK
2X GBU-12 PAVEWAY
2X MK 20 ROCKEYE
2X DURANDAL BOMB
3X MK 82-C SLICK
3X MK 82-1 SNAKEYE
2X MK 20 ROCKEYE II
2X MK 122 FIREYE
2X CBU-72 FAE
2X MK 35 IN CLUSTER
1X ISOB-1 MINELETS
1X 135MM/IR CAMERA
1X 1900 LBS. FUEL

Fuel Est: 10404 lbs.

Fuel Loaded: 11900 lbs.

MK 20 ROCKEYE

RETARDED-FALL CLUSTER BOMB:
Effective against against soft buildings, oil equipment, missiles. Drop above 500'.

The player can choose between two F-117A, one real (Lockheed's) and one fictional (MicroProse's). The difference between the two is simple: the MicroProse F-117A packs a bigger punch thanks to its four weapons bays, as opposed to the Lockheed's two. O this screen the player can load weapons by simply highlighting a bay and choosing a weapon from the huge list.

lacks the payload to survive long), and *F-117A* missions are more a test of the pilot's landscape-hugging flying skills than an exercise in dogfighting. Hence some may find the gameplay a little too quiet for their tastes - certainly flyboys fresh from *F-15 2* are likely to be more than a little disappointed by *F-117A*'s relative lack of action. However, there's no denying the thrill you get from successfully completing mission with all the difficulty settings at the max.

Following each mission (successful or otherwise), the player is given a blow-by-blow debriefing, detailing every hit and miss of the mission. The player's performance is logged on his or her record, and repeated success is rewarded by promotion. As with most MicroProse games there's no real 'ending' as such, satisfaction comes from successfully completing missions and working up the ranks.

THE GAME'S THE SAME?

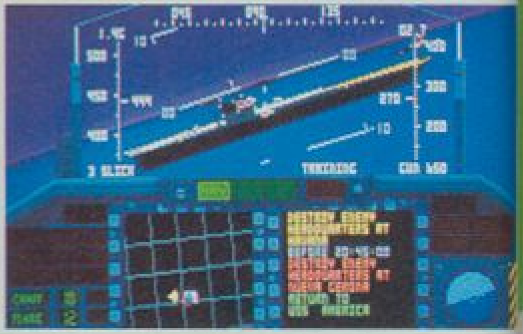
It's only after the player's flown a couple of missions and the buzz from the new graphics has worn off that a small problem arises: *F-117A* is very similar to *F-19*. Sure, the graphics are much better (at least, if you have VGA), and there are more combat arenas, and the accuracy of the 'planes performance has been tweaked, but the majority of players will be hard put to find substantial differences in the gameplay.

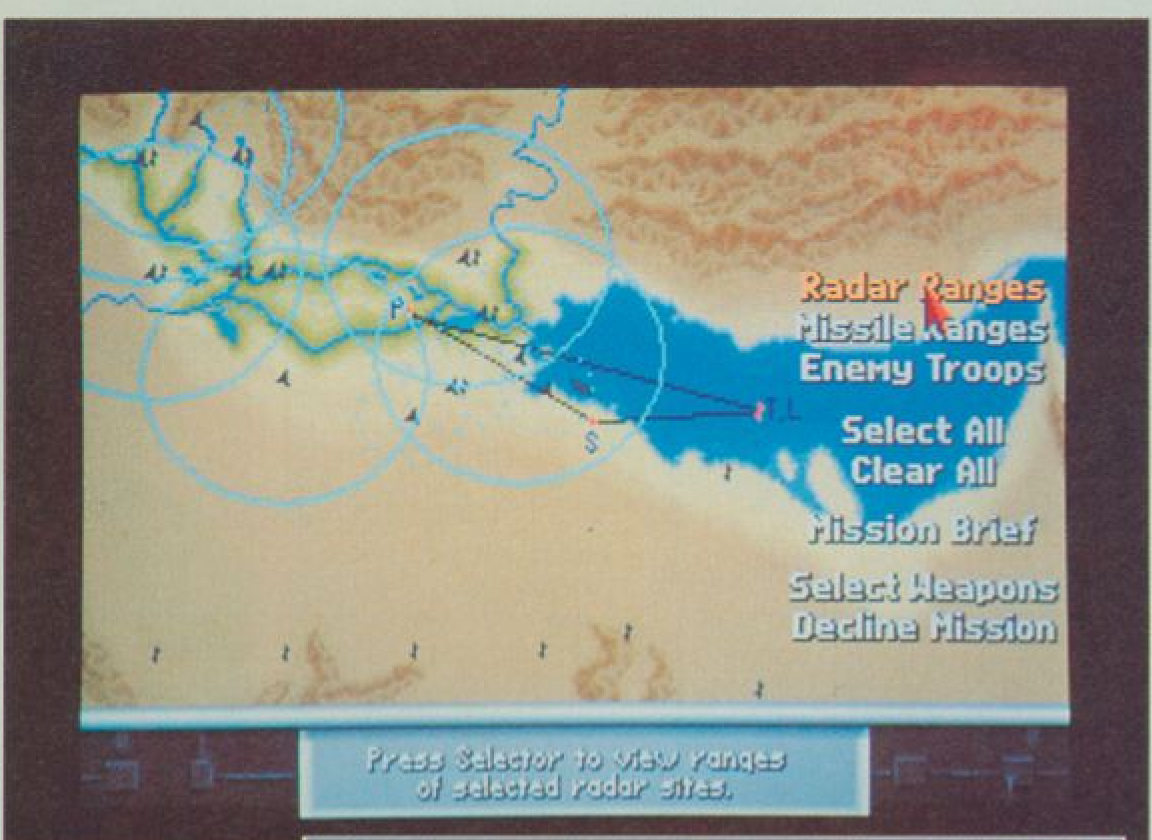
In a way, this similarity is a testament to the skills of MicroProse's game designers. At the time *F-19* was being written, technical details about how the 'plane looked and performed were shrouded in Top Secrecy. Indeed, such was the hush-hush surrounding the project that MicroProse even had to make an educated guess at the 'plane's eventual classification. Because Lockheed's previous fighter had been called the F-18 it seemed obvious that the next (the Stealth Fighter) would be called the F-19. However, for reasons best known to itself, Lockheed decided upon F-117A.

Thus, in the absence of full technical specifications the game's designers had to piece together the scattered pieces of information and use educated extrapolation to fill in any blanks. And they were pretty close to the mark. Apparently, when the game appeared, USAF officials were more than a little concerned by the close correlation in performance between the sim and the real thing!

In terms of graphics, sound and playability *F-117A* is MicroProse's finest sim yet, and given the company's track record that's the strongest recommendation I can give. But *F-19* owners may find that the differences between that game and this are substantial but maybe not enough to make *F-117A* a completely essential purchase.

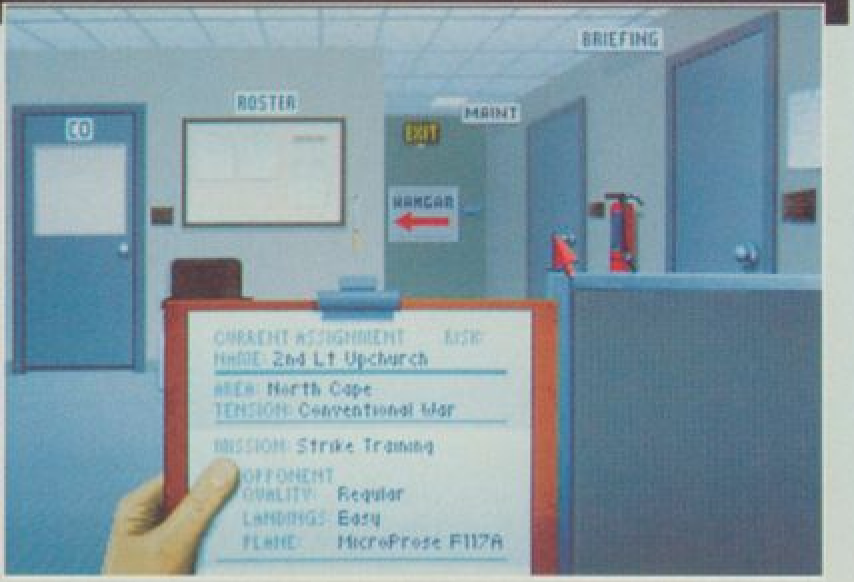
● **David Upchurc**





Press Selector to view ranges of selected radar sites.

(Above) A wise pilot will check out the enemy's defences in a given combat arena before accepting a mission. On the briefing screen the player can study the locations of all known enemy units, and plot a flight path accordingly.



CURRENT ASSIGNMENT RISK:
NAME: 2nd Lt Upchurch
AREA: North Cape
TENSION: Conventional War
MISSION: Strike Training
OPPONENT
QUALITY: Regular
LANDINGS: Easy
PLANE: MicroProse F117A

(Right) This is one of the first screens the player sees. By moving the selection cursor over the various doors and notice boards, the player can access the briefing room, the armaments room, the pilots' roster, the hangar and so on.

PLAYER
Manager
2
TM

by Dino Dini

PLAYER MANAGER 2 IS EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED AT THE END OF THE YEAR OR EARLY NEXT YEAR.

Many thanks for the support and constructive criticism that so many of you extended to our products. Player Manager remains to date perhaps the only real time soccer management game. Now Dino is busy writing Player Manager 2 and the draft specifications are detailed below. If you have any suggestions that would enhance the depth or playability of the Player Manager 2, please write to us.

- One M. byte minimum memory. An additonal disk drive may also be required.
- Full implementation of KICK OFF 2 and FINAL WHISTLE wherever possible. A double tactics editor will also be included.
- Three division leagues with 64 teams. Two Domestic and two Europeans Cup Competitions.
- A young player must be nursed to the first team place otherwise he may burn out quickly.
- Numerous factors can cause player stress which will play a very important part in his individual match performance.
- Captain appointment. Man of the match, Manager of the month and the year awards.
- Manager performance to be put under tighter scrutiny. i.e. failure to get promotion after awhile or maintain the position at the top may lead to being sacked.
- Introduction of some really astute and high spending computer managers. A Player Manager may also get an offer to manager another team in the league.
- Facility to see the stats. of every player in the league and on the transfer market. Only transfer listed players will have price indication.
- Option to bid for a player not transfer listed and overseas players. Introduction of Scouts.
- Much improved match report with information on scoring attempts, keeper saves & possession in each half of the match.
- International caps awarded and also compulsory retirement of players reaching maturity.
- Improved financial structure. Multi-players option.
- Improved coaching with facility to concentrate on an individual player.
- Invisible management stats. influenced by individual player and team performance.
- Referees, pitches and wind may be implemented. Pre-season friendlies.

SUGGESTIONS THAT CANNOT BE IMPLEMENTED

- Enhanced graphics or facility to edit player names. Both of these take up too much memory.

Each letter received until 15th July 1991 will go into a draw. First 10 letters drawn will receive an autographed copy of Player Manager 2 and next 10 letters drawn will receive £10 record tokens.
Now is your chance to help us create a game you want. Take it and you may also win a prize.

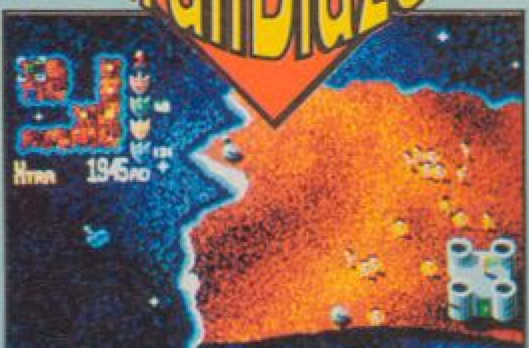
Please address the envelope to the address below:

ANCO

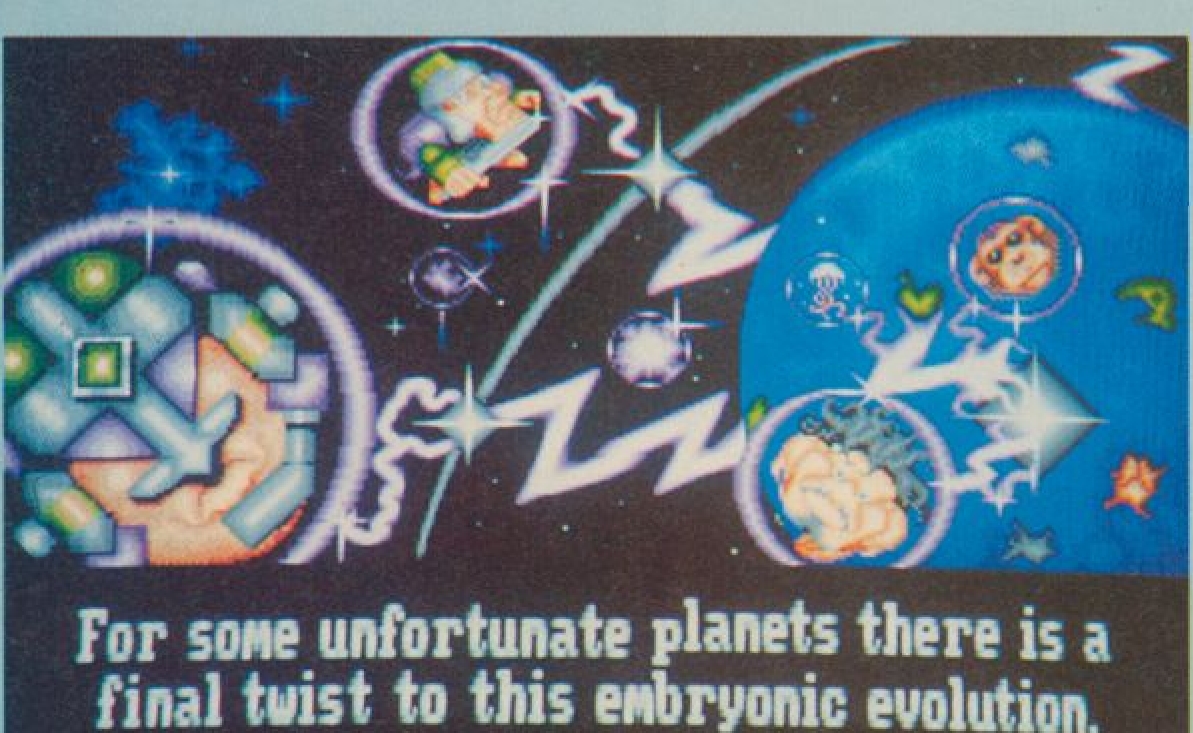
PLAYER MANAGER 2, ANCO SOFTWARE LTD.,
UNIT 7 MILLSIDE IND. ESTATE, LAWSON ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT, DA1 5BH

MEGA lo MANIA

ACE TrailBlazer

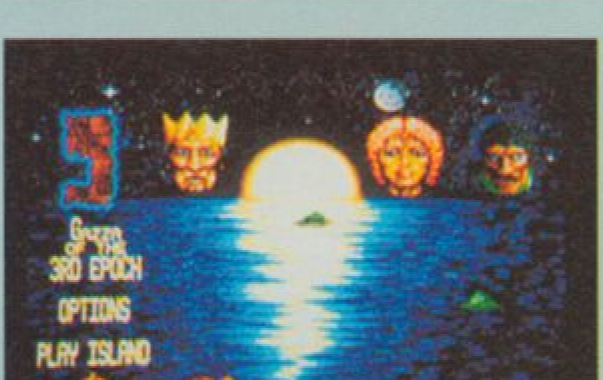


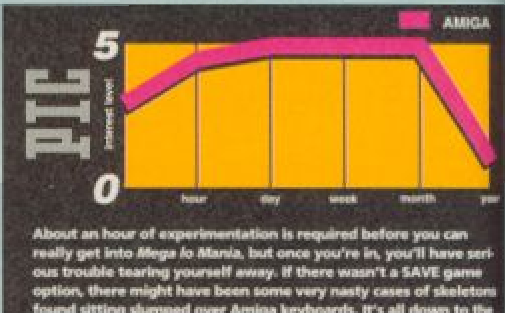
Power Extreme! Can Sensible Software's first foray into the theatre of strategy gaming conquer the world? More importantly, can you?


For some unfortunate planets there is a final twist to this embryonic evolution.

(Top)Towers are the most important aspect in the game. Without one to live and work in, your men are completely unprotected and can't do anything - not even multiply. Fortunately your men have a default mode, so if they're left in an unoccupied sector, they'll go to work on building a tower from whatever materials they can find. As your people's tech level increases, so does the sophistication and strength of the towers. But however strong or well-defended they may be, they're still vulnerable, and if a large enough force lays siege to it for long enough, it will be weakened and eventually destroyed, killing everyone in it.

(Right)An entire epoch in all its splendour. Before you choose, view each island in turn, to see which opponents you'll be up against and get a feel for the lie of the land. When one is selected, allocate some men from your starting figure of 100 (remembering that once an island is conquered, all your men must stay there to protect it can't be used again) and place your home tower in the sector of your choice. Then it's down to ACTION!

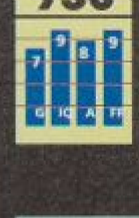




About an hour of experimentation is required before you can really get into *Mega lo Mania*, but once you're in, you'll have serious trouble tearing yourself away. If there wasn't a SAVE game option, there might have been some very nasty cases of skeletons found sitting slumped over Amiga keyboards. It's all down to the instinctiveness of the design and and the clever way in which the strategy has been constructed. Unfortunately, there's unlikely to be much compulsion to carry on once all the epochs have been conquered.

ACE RATING

930



AMIGA

The graphics bristle with character and animate nicely, although there's a slightly unpolished feel to some of the backgrounds. Sound is undoubtedly one of the game's strongest aspects, from the faultless (and very funny) sampled speech, to the music, which comes straight from Holst's . The only things that would seem to be missing are a two-player option and the ability to load in extra landscapes - both features *which we have come to expect as standard* from games like this.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW

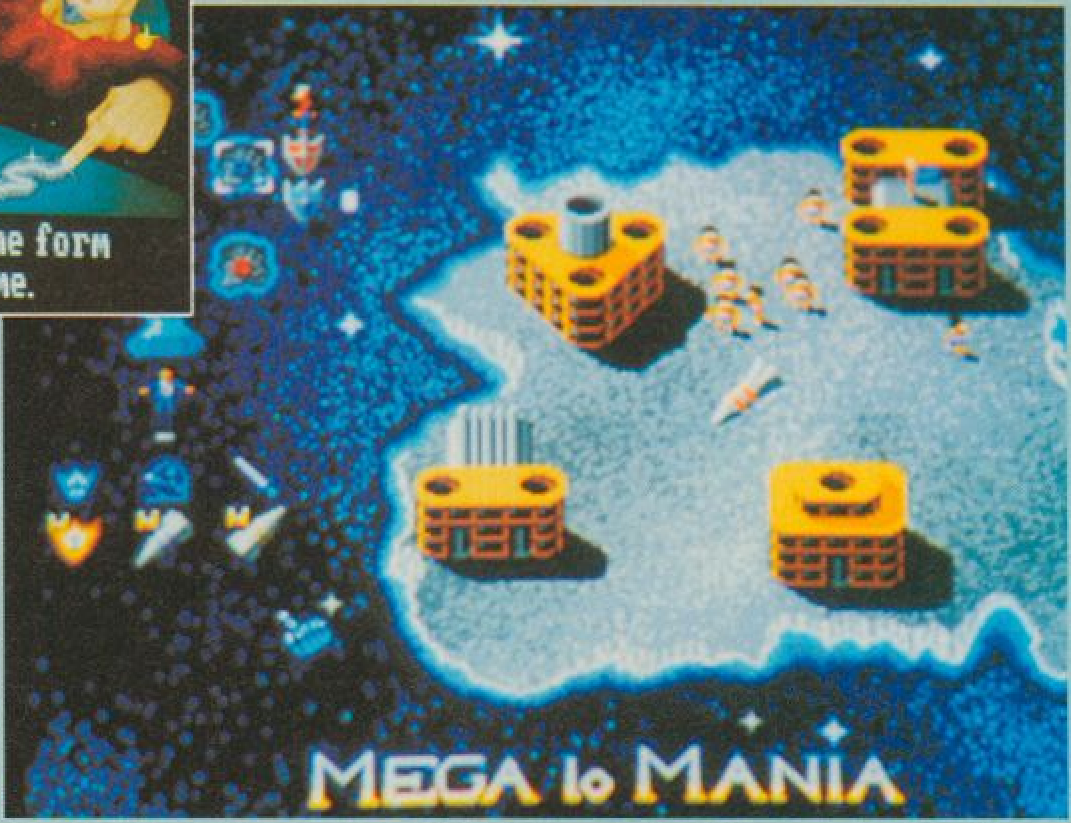
The quest for ultimate power is eternal. Everybody craves it, lusts after it, but only a few ever truly attain it. The processes that decide the lucky ones are often heated and frequently bloody. But for those who survive to collect the spoils, the rewards are worth it. Power, control, domination... not to mention some serious kicking in.

If the pursuit of such positions of power in rea life may seem a bit daunting, at least there are plenty of opportunities to stalk the corridors of power (and then blow them up) on computer. Bullfrog has already produced two sterling efforts in the forms of *Populous* and *PowerMonger*, while Gremlin is promising *Flag* for the near future (see last issue). Mirrorsoft's offering, however, comes as a bit of a surprise, only because of its unexpected origins.

Those wild 'n' crazy guys at Sensible Software aren't known for being very serious. An unmistakable strand of whackiness runs through all of their games, from the 8-bit classics *Wizball* and *Parallax* to their sports sims *MicroProse Soccer* and *International 3D Tennis* - and now *Mega lo Mania*, the boys' first attempt at *Populous*-style strategy.

A contest that takes place in the form
of an ancient heavenly game.

(Right) The big guns start coming out as you reach the later epochs. When islands are broken into smaller pieces and cut off by water, the only way to attack them is by using an aerial weapon, such as a biplane, jet fighter or tactical nuke. These weapons also have the advantage of not being limited by range, so you can attack just about anyone, anywhere. Fortunately, the defensive weapons also get better, so nukes are knocked out by SDI lasers and biplanes dogfight high above battle-torn sectors. Great stuff!

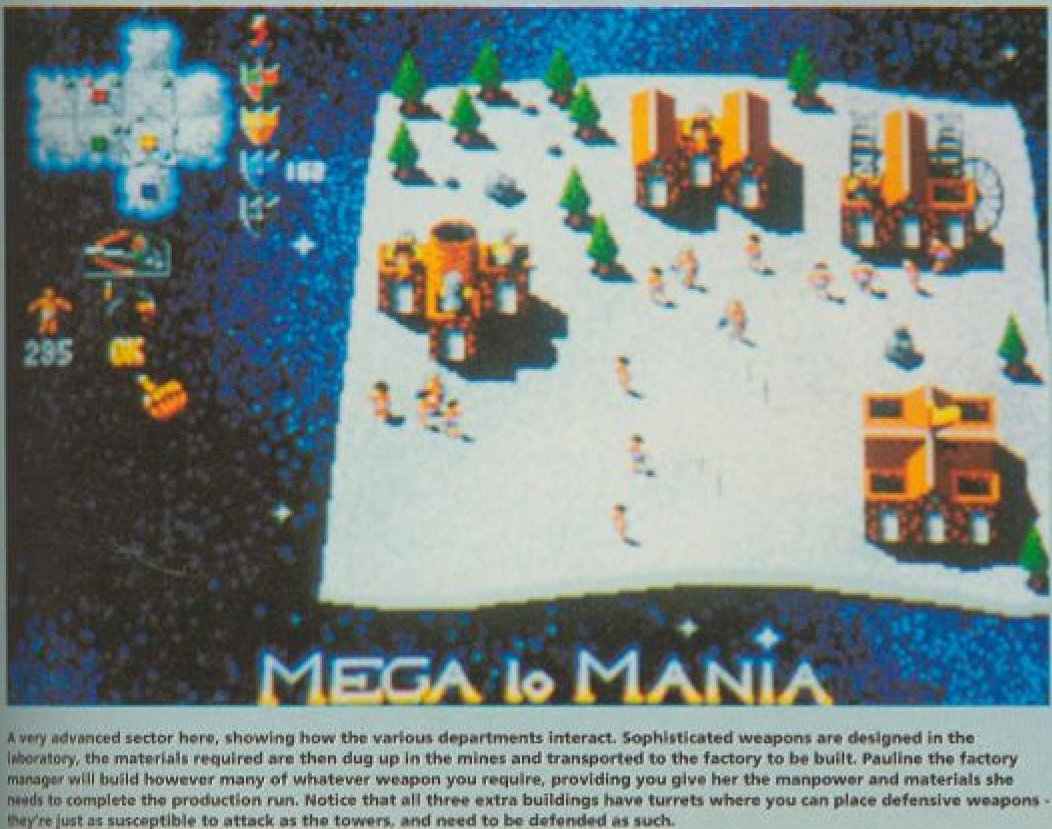


While *Mega lo Mania*'s basic gameplay is without doubt a serious affair, plenty of effort has gone into ensuring that the actual approach is as camp and comedic as possible. After all, if you can't laugh when hundreds of your troops are being slaughtered on a far-off battlefield before your very eyes, when can you?

Mega lo Mania's storyline, such as it is, is set in an alternate universe where, when new worlds are formed and intelligent life placed upon them, interstellar freeloaders descend upon them to seize the reigns of power. However, when more than one decides to stake a claim on the same planet, problems can arise - as has in this case, when against all probability, four such megalomaniacs happen to have arrived at exactly the same planet at exactly the same time. Naturally, something's got to give, as a planet can only have one overall ruler. So begins an embittered campaign of imperialism as you take on three computer opponents with wide-ranging personalities for control of the planet. Of course there's no room for compromise, so only when every last member of all the opposing armies has been totally obliterated can victory be proclaimed.

The world consists of nine groups of three islands, each of which exits within its own epoch, or time zone. Things begin in prehistoric times and progress through all the major historical periods until the final level, played in the year 2001.

The conquest is taken in steps, one island at a time. At the outset of each epoch, you're given a hundred men to do with as you will. Since men cannot be moved from island to island or epoch to epoch, even when conquered, it's vital that you divide your resources carefully. It may be tempting to send in ninety men in order to ensure quick and easy victory on the first island, but since this only leaves ten with which to take on the other two, it's not an advised course of action.



A very advanced sector here, showing how the various departments interact. Sophisticated weapons are designed in the laboratory, the materials required are then dug up in the mines and transported to the factory to be built. Pauline the factory manager will build however many of whatever weapon you require, providing you give her the manpower and materials she needs to complete the production run. Notice that all three extra buildings have turrets where you can place defensive weapons - they're just as susceptible to attack as the towers, and need to be defended as such.

Islands consist of a number of independent square sectors, which join together in varying fashions to produce different shaped land masses. They differ in size and complexity, from simple two-sector countries at the outset to giant mini-continents and islands broken into smaller mini-islands. Each side (you'll always be up against at least one opponent, and as many as three) claims a sector at the outset and builds a tower filled with however many men have been allocated. From then on it's no holds barred as each side races to get that technological and strategic edge that will allow them to wipe the floor with the opposition.

Your men can be ordered to perform a wide range of tasks, from designing weapons and building factories to rampaging around looking for something to kill. However, if left to their own devices, they get down to... ahem, business of their own. . Thus the number of your followers multiplies and continues to multiply until you give them something else to do.

Basically, *Mega lo Mania* is about war and killing, and so every sub-task that can be performed is a means to that end. In the design department, your men design weapons, both for the defence of your own land and the takeover of foreign parts.

Factories and laboratories exist to build and research more elaborate weapons, and mines are built in order to extract raw materials with which to build yet more weapons. All of these operations take time and manpower however, and since they're all dependent on one another, your resources must be juggled correctly if you're to have any success. It's vital that weapons are built, since sending an army out ill-equipped is tantamount to suicide. An army armed with crossbows and catapults could easily wipe out an unarmed force three times its size!

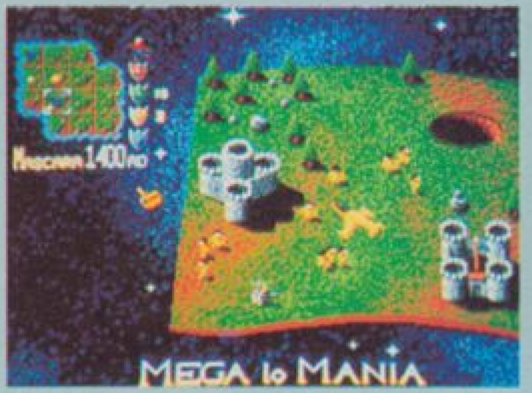
As weapons increase in complexity and destructive potential, so does the time and labour it takes to build them. The most basic weapon, a rock, consists of just one element (bones, strangely enough), which doesn't need to

☞

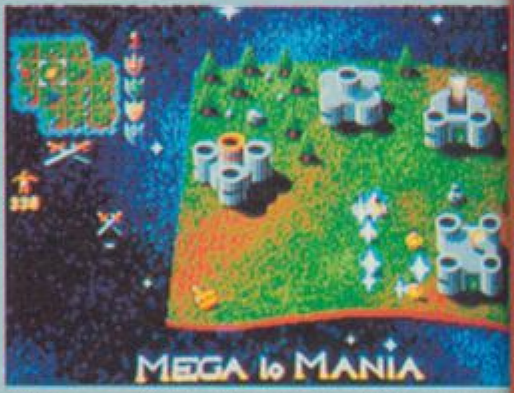
be mined, and is built automatically as soon as the design and materials are available. More advanced weapons like pikes and bows require combinations of different minerals, some of which must be mined specially, and take time to design.

As you advance further through time, weapons like machine guns, bazookas and even nuclear warheads appear which, while devastating in effect, require complex combinations of materials and masses of time and labour to research and construct. Without purpose-built labs and factory facilities, these more advanced weapons can't be built at all.

As your research and build more tools of destruction, the "tech level" of your people increases accordingly, allowing you to move onto a new set of more advanced weapons.

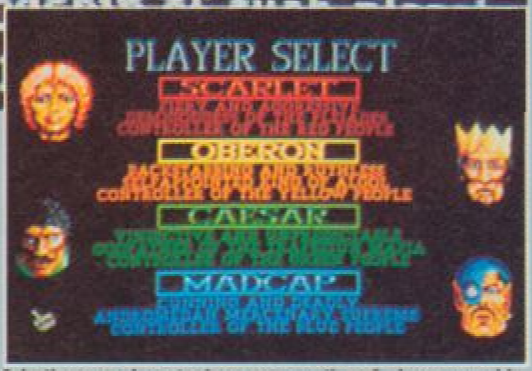


Essentially, your men can build three types of weapon. Shields come in varying strengths and are used to top up a tower's strength if it is weakened by attack. Tower Weapons are those designed to placed in tower turrets and used to fend off attack, such as cauldrons of boiling oil and crossbows. Offensive Weapons are the ones you equip your men with when sent out to attack, and include everything from throwing rocks to giant catapults, gatling guns and bazookas.



Minerals are the key to progress in Mega lo Mania. Each secto is different in terms of the minerals that can be mined from In the worst kind of sector, the only materials available are those that can be gathered from the ground, severely limiting your choice of weapons. Other sectors have natural mines from which more basic elements can be gleaned, while others which contain more sophisticated materials, for use in buildi advanced weapons, require a special mine to be built and operated. Whatever the type of sector, however, the mineral supply will not last forever, and when the mine has been dug to the seams, you may have to move to a fresh sector in orde to get the materials you need.

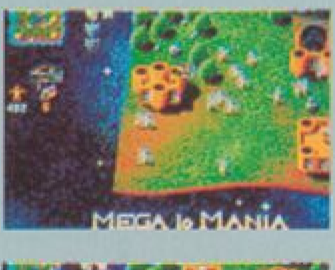
The competition for Godship of each planet
fierce among the unive



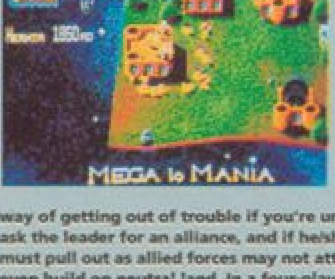
Selecting your character is more a question of who you would least like to fight, rather than who you would most like to be. Each leader has a different personality - but none of them are very nice.

Effectively, civilisation evolves into another stage, so cavemen become robed biblical characters, who become medieval men, who become romans, who become elizabethans, WW1 soldiers and so on through the ages. Tech levels increase at varying speeds dependent on how quickly a race is advancing, so it's not uncommon to see two armies from different time periods slugging it out. Obviously, the more advanced race has the technological, and thus strategic advantage in these encounters.

Much effort has gone into making *Mega lo Mania* as simple and as instinctive to play as possible. While the icon system seems a little daunting at first, automatic help boxes that appear to explain the purpose of everything you point to make things clearer, while a comprehensive library of sampled speech serves not only to add humour to the proceedings, but also to give vital aural clues - the way your design chief announces the completion of a weapon design, for instance, gives some indication as to how well that weapon has been constructed. Various other characters pop up as the game progresses, such as the Captain Mainwaring army type, who exclaims 'Tower critical' and 'It's all over!' when the battle is going particularly badly. Listen out too for the burly mine chief and Pauline, the chirpy cockney factory supervisor.



A battle breaks out, and the fate of this tower hangs in the balance. Armies don't march, they are teleported from place to place, but can only move one sector at a time (no diagonals allowed). As the war rages, two figures show the current size of each force so you can see how things are going. If things look bad and resources are available, it only take a mouse click to inject re-inforcements into the area and give the enemy a big surprise!



Alliances may be formed with rival armies, simply by asking their leader. The answer you get depends on their mood and the current state of the war, and will consist of a simple yes or no. It's actually a very good way of getting out of trouble if you're under heavy attack - just ask the leader for an alliance, and if he/she agrees, the troops must pull out as allied forces may not attack each other, or even build on neutral land. In a four-player game it's possible to draw up a three-way alliance and gang up on the unfortunate remainder, but beware - it could happen to you.

Mega lo Mania's an excellent strategy game for many of the same reasons why Populous was so good. It's simple to play, yet the strategy runs deep and is cleverly constructed. There are genuine tactics to learn and develop, and with thre opponents that really are cunning and devious, there are some very tense moments. Allocating your men to the vital tasks for research, manufacture, mining and battle forms the main part of the game, since every department functions not as a whole, but part of a larger, more complex industrial machine. If one part falls behind, the whole thing can grind to a halt. And while each landscape may only be a fractio of the size of a *Populous* or *PowerMonger* worl it's amazing how complex and embittered the armed campaigns can get.

While the earlier epochs can be cleared quickly, towards the middle and end of the game, landscapes can be fought over for hours with battle after battle and hundreds of casualties on each side, before one side emerges victorious. Because things can be so teeth-grindingly bitter and bloody, winning is al the more satisfying - and defeat all the more painful. Fortunately the humour is there, in the form of the camp speech and text, to take the edge off things and provide some light relief.

If there is one major criticism of *Mega lo Mania*, it's with its longevity. It's questionable as to how long it will take to conquer all nine thre island epochs, and once that's done there's unlikely to be that much incentive to return. This was never a problem with Populous and *PowerMonger*, simply because of the volume o landscapes offered. Some kind of random epoc generator or level designer would not have gon amiss, in only to give the player an incentive to carry on once he's completed the main game.

There's very little faulting what's there, however, *and given the die-hard difficulty of the* later levels, you're not likely to get bored in a hurry. There's plenty to spur you on, in particula the desire to play with the awesome destructive power offered by the weapons in the later levels In strategic terms, it's every bit as strong as *Populous*, while managing to offer new and genuinely innovative aspects never before seen in particular the technical progression through the ages, which works brilliantly. In a nutshell, i the best and most playable game of its type since *Populous*.

● **Gary Whi**

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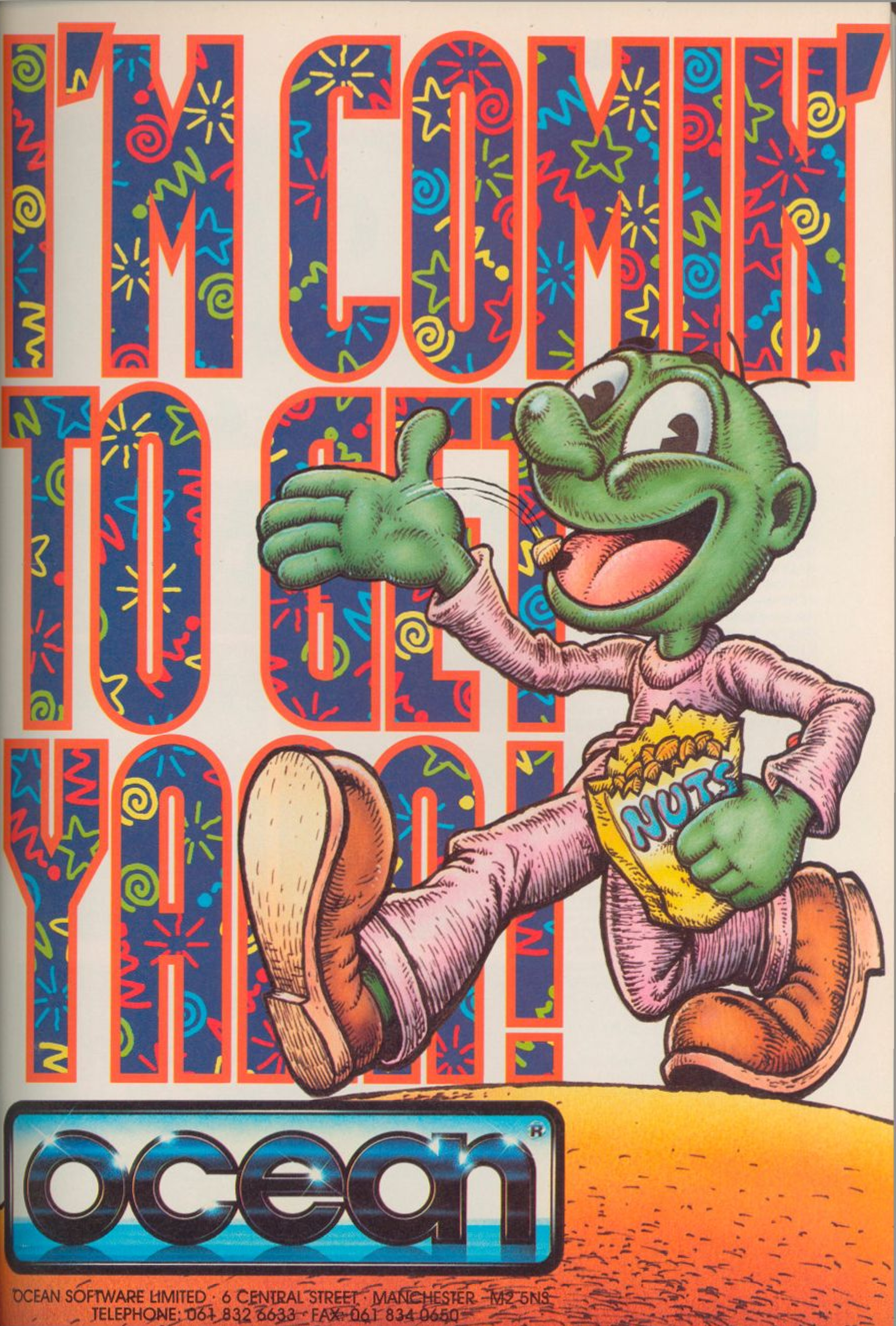
Gary Whitta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MAGIC Pockets

Meet the Bitmap Kid. He's got the whole world in his... pockets? Just what is RENEGADE on?

Following hard on the heels of the excellent *Gods, Magic Pockets* has a lot to live up to. The game centres around the pocket-delving antics of the Bros' new mascot, the Bitmap Kid. Thanks to a bizarre twist of Physics, his pockets are far larger on the inside than on the outside. Big enough, indeed, to contain four huge and varied Worlds. Stupidly, the Kid has lost four of his very favourite toys, one in each World. So the Kid dives into his own pockets to retrieve them. (Keep reading, it gets weirder...)

Now this wouldn't be too difficult, but unfortunately the Kid has a monster in his pocket. Or, to be more precise, several monsters. The Worlds are populated by a freaks menagery of monsters, all with a deep grudge against the Kid. (Well, wouldn't you be a little miffed, having to spend your life in close proximity to someone else's groin?)

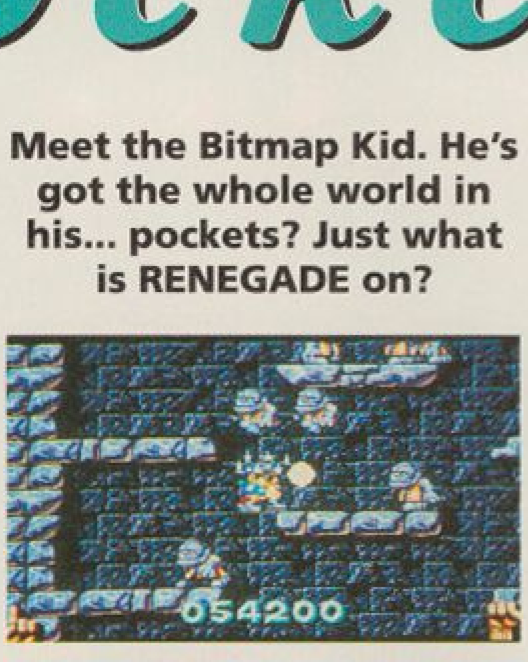
Well, the Kid may be a little careless, but he's certainly not stupid. He knows he'll need something to protect him from the murderous attentions of the local wildlife (and are they ever wild!). From his pockets he can produce a weapon, each based on some sort of natural phenomena, such as whirlwinds or snowballs, and varying according to the World he's on.

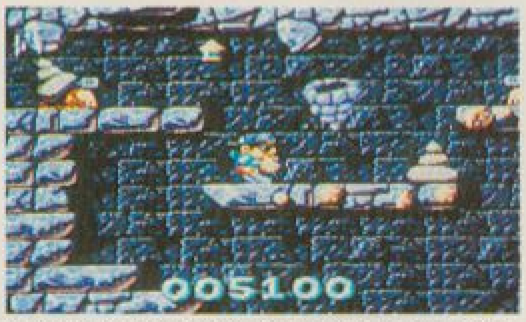
The weapons, though they differ in some respects, all act in fundamentally the same way. The Kid digs his hand into his pocket and has a good rummage round. The longer he rummages, the more powerful his weapon becomes. (Stop sniggering at the back.)

At maximum power the weapon can be used to trap monsters. The Kid can then run into the struggling nasty and turn it into a bonus (either a sweet or power-up). Alternatively, the Kid can jump into a just-thrown maximum power weapon and use it to whizz him about the screen, destroying anything in his path.

Each of the levels is huge, and it'd be very easy to get lost, but fortunately every time the Kid throws a weapon, a tiny arrow flies out of his pocket indicating where the Kid can find his lost toy. It's not vital that you retrieve the toy to finish a level - if you come across the Exit you can leave if you want - but they help in killing the baddies and are worth a whole bundle of points.

At the end of a World the Kid has to face a super challenge. And for once it's not the usual boring five-minute sluggathon against some mega-baddy. Instead, it's a trial involving the toy the Kid's just been looking for. For example, in the Cave World it's a bike race against loads of other monsters, while in the Jungle World it's a boxing match between the Kid and the giant gorilla.





(Above) Trouble mounts for the Bitmap Kid - he's already been dazed by contact with one nasty, and there's a veritable army of others closing in to finish him off. Serves him right for not being cute!

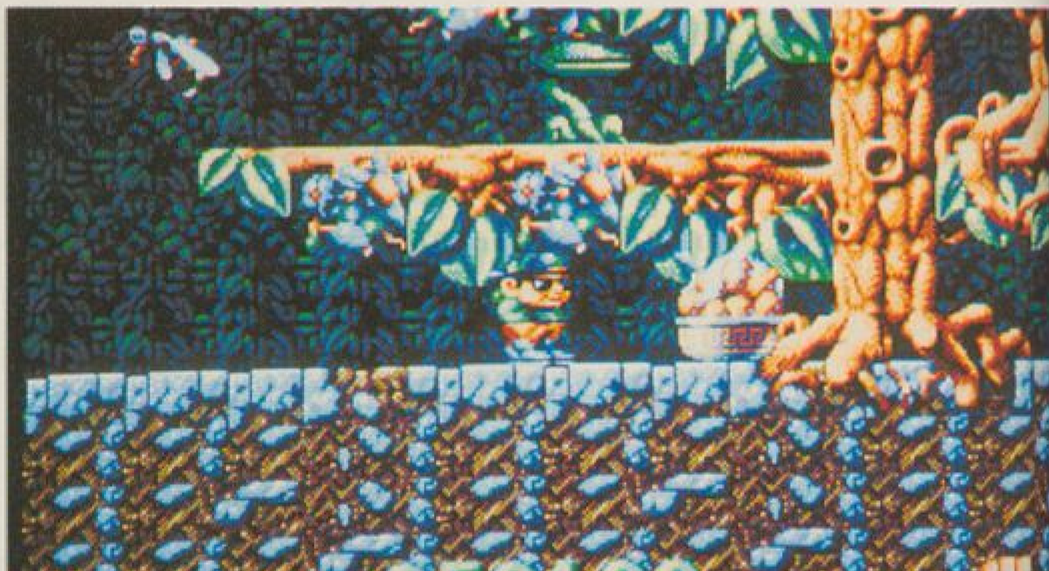
In addition, there are oodles of secret rooms to find and hidden passageways to explore, special bonuses to collect and magical power-ups to experiment with, and enough surprises to keep you playing until The Chaos Engine appears.

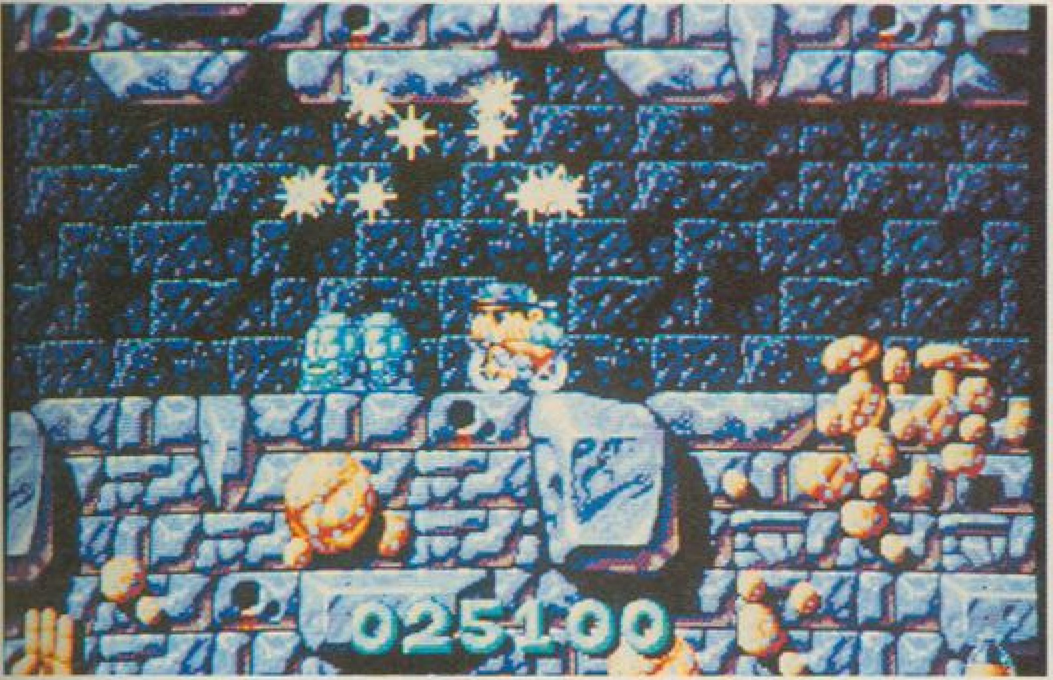
THE MAGIC IS BACK?

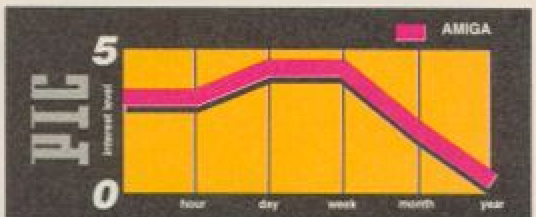
From the description, *Magic Pockets* seems to have all the ingredients you'd want in a top platform game. But as any cook knows having the correct ingredients is only half the story. Sad to say, but *Magic Pockets* has several faults that mar its playability and the player's enjoyment.

The graphics, for example. There's no denying that they're well drawn, but the intricate detail and overdone shading and illumination effects make them to dense and hard on the eye. They just don't reflect the light and breezy subject matter. And the Bitmap Kid sprite is just plain ugly, with not one iota of cuteness about him.

Technically, the game doesn't astound. The scrolling is chunky and jerky, and betrays the game's ST origins. The action is fast enough







Right from the first the game's very tough - hair-tearingly, nail-bitingly so at times - and it never lets up. And while repeated play does result in some progress, the game's difficulty far outweighs its addictiveness, and you may jack it all in long before you reach the fourth world.

ACE RATING

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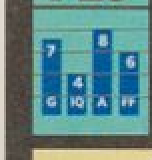
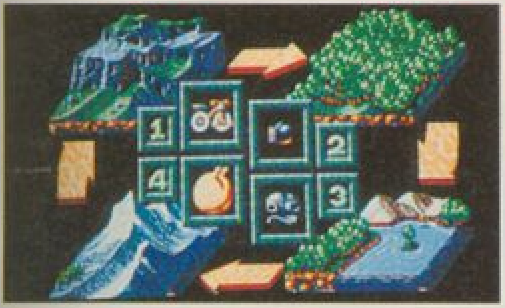


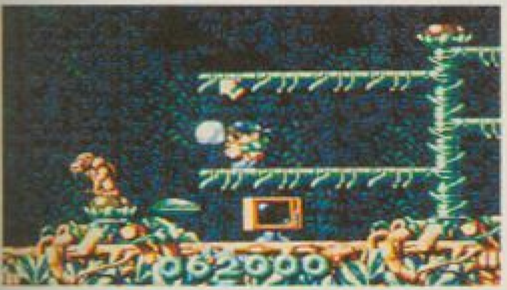
AMIGA

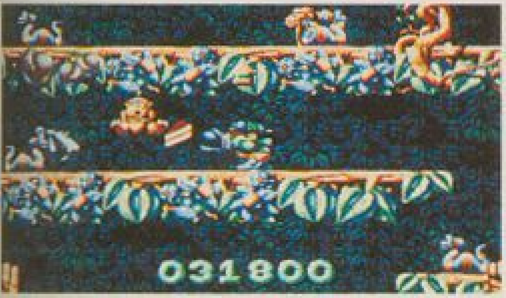
After the superb *Gods*, *Magic Pockets* comes as a bit of a disappointment. The game looks good from the screenshots, but in action is less than stunning. The scrolling is slow and jerky (all the hallmarks of an ST port) and the sluggish action and clumsy control make play far less enjoyable then it could and should have been.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£25.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£25.99	OUT NOW







POCKET PANDEMONIUM

THE CAVES - The first world is made up of five huge levels and finds the Bitmap Kid hunting down his bike. The Kid lobs deadly whirlwinds to see the baddies off.

THE JUNGLE - Six sub-tropical levels of action as the Kid seeks his boxing gloves. Would ya believe that rainclouds are his monster mashers? No, I though not.

THE LAKE - Glug! The Kid's search for his diving helmet takes him through seven underwater levels. Lucky he brought a bumper pack of monster-chillin' ice cubes along, isn't it?

THE MOUNTAINS - The final and greatest challenge. Armed with snowballs, the Kid has to negotiate eight levels of precipitous platforms in search of his Space Hopper. (Blimey! Remember Space Hoppers? That's going back a bit!)

when there's not too much on-screen, but slows when lots of meanies appear - not a great deal but enough to detract from the player's enjoyment.

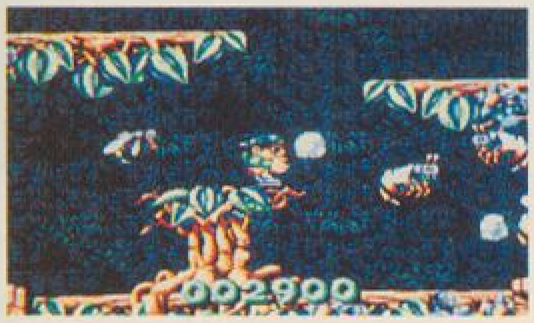
Control over the Kid is also problematic. In a good platform game the control method should ideally become invisible, and the player find that he or she is responding to the on-screen action reflexively. This never happens in *Pockets* - too often you feel that the control method is working against you. In part due to the sluggish game speed, control over the Kid feels coarse, and lacks the finesse you get controlling the likes of Mario or Bub in *Rainbow Islands*.

The game's pacing is too stop/start to be totally satisfying. Just when you starting to build up some momentum and the action's hotting up, you find you have to stop and wait for, say, your weapon to build up to maximum power, or the bonuses to stop bouncing so that they can be picked up. (This latter is particularly annoying - the bonuses bounce THREE times before they come to rest, and you just have to stand around waiting for them like an idiot.)

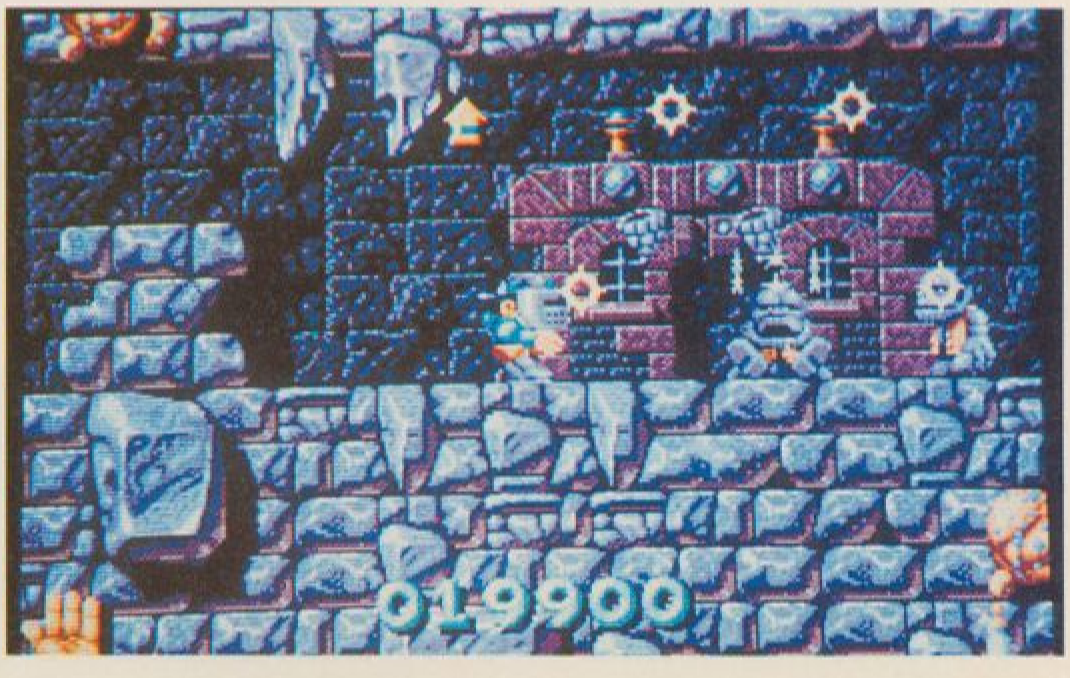
Not only does the control system take a bit of getting used to, but the game is tough too, and initially these factors combine to make the game very off-putting and frankly no fun at all.

However, perservere and things do improve substantially, with some clever original ideas on display. But sadly things never improve enough to bring Magic Pockets into the same league as Mario Bros or Sonic the Hedgehog.

● **David Upchurch**



(Above) The action hots up in the Jungle level - sock it to those pesky bumblebees, Bitmap Kid!
(Below) The kid unleashes a volley of whirlwinds - which look rather like bunches of grapes - against his mutoid foes. The on screen shows you where to go to find the toy or, if you've got it, the direction of the exit.



MICROPROSE GOLF

It's getting mighty crowded in the club house. Can MICROPROSE offer anything new?

Oh, bloody hell. It's not as if we haven't already got enough golf games is it? Well, a new addition to the crowded genre is more or less inevitable around this time of year, when the sun's out and all the big tournaments are in full swing. In this case, however, at least we're getting something that we've really not seen in a while, and that's a genuine attempt at a proper golf simulation, as opposed to the more arcade-orientated approach that has, to date, produced all the best golf games. *Leaderboard*, *Links* and *PGA Tour Golf* have all simplified the great game to some extent and come up smelling of roses for their efforts, while the more intricate 'serious' efforts, such as *Greg Norman's Ultimate Golf* and *World Tour Golf* have ended up just - as they say - smelling.

MicroProse Golf's intention, seemingly, is to strike a happy medium between the two styles, combining all the aspects and factors present in real golf, while keeping things instinctive and fun to play. The new twist is the use of filled 3D graphics of the kind that 'Prose puts to such good use in its flight simulations, being utilised here to provide an accurate contoured landscape.

Six courses are ready and waiting to be played around on, in any of a vast number of game variations - tournament, singles, three and foursomes, 'skins' and medal play and various others. Apart from that, most of the pre-game preparation is pretty much as standard - select a bagfull of appropriate clubs from the available array, punch in your player data (which includes the ability to handicap players and, less useful but just as welcome, select your jersey colour) and you're off.

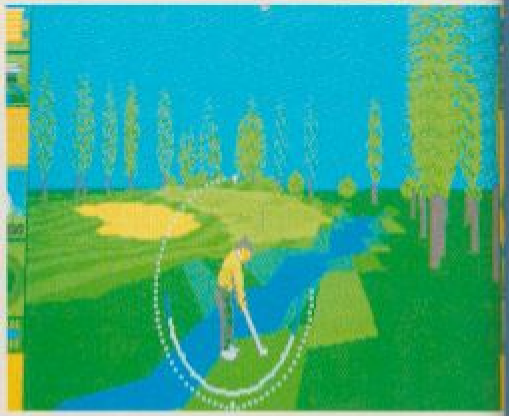
The shots themselves are played in a fashion that, while in effect is much the same as most previous golf efforts, is at least approached in a slightly different way. Shots are set up by way of a birds-eye view map, where you can decide roughly where you want your shot to go in terms of distance and position. The computer caddy equips you with the club it deems best for the shot you wish to play (although experienced players may want to do their own choosing) and you're ready to go. Unless of course you're really finicky and want to adjust the positioning of your feet (which ultimately affects the probability of playing a hook or slice shot) and, for tee shots, fiddle with the position of the ball on the tee, determining whether the ball will roll or stop when it lands.

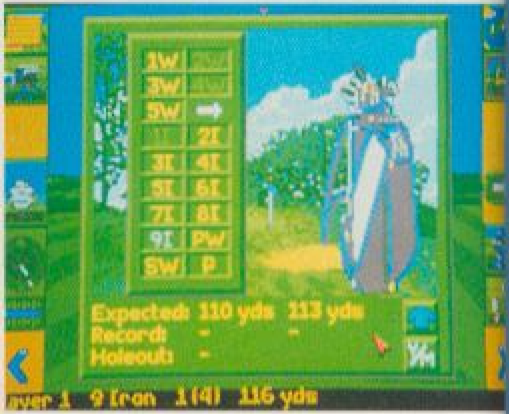
When you're finally happy and limbered up, it's over to the familiar behind-the-player view to play. It's all done via an oval swingometer which consists of two bars - the first, which operates during the backswing handles shot power, while the second, inside bar deals with shot direction and the dreaded hook and slice. The direction bar consists of a central white area and two outline blue bars, one for hook and one for slice. The more powerful the shot, the slimmer the 'safe' white area becomes and the easier it is to mistime your second click and fall into miss-hit territory.

When the ball is in the air, a variable view TV camera tracks to the best of its ability, snapping angles and panning to give the best viewpoint at all times. When it comes to putting, things are equally as simple - the power bar is decorated with only one mark, which indicates the power required to get the ball to the hole on a normal, flat green. However, gradients and speed must be taken into account if the ball is to go anywhere near its target - some greens are like mountain ranges.

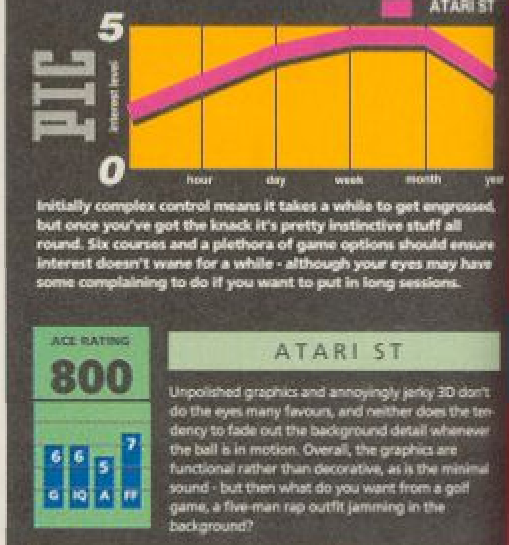
There's plenty of frills to compliment the thrills - shot replays, player stats and a very nice driving range and putting green where you can hone your skills. It's a very good golf game indeed, and most of the ideas in evidence are both orig nal and relevant. The power bar, for instance, doesn't have detailed number increments, enhancing the idea of playing by feel, rather tha just stopping at the right number. There are problems, such as the map display which gets very cumbersome when trying to play close-range shots because the scale doesn't change, and the 3D display can get on the nerves after a time, but for those willing to invest the time, effort and practice, golf fans should find this equally as rewarding as the current pack leade *PGA Tour Golf* - if not quite as instantly gratifying.

● Gary Whit





(Top) A tricky shot over water and a perilous bunker to get t the sloping green. A long chip should suffice.
(Above) Caddy! A nine iron for this shot, I think...



Initially complex control means it takes a while to get engrossed, but once you've got the knack it's pretty instinctive stuff all round. Six courses and a plethora of game options should ensure interest doesn't wane for a while - although your eyes may have some complaining to do if you want to put in long sessions.

ACE RATING

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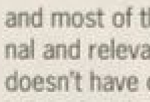


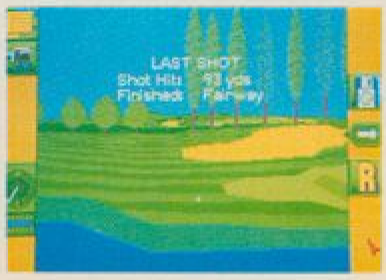
ATARI ST

Unpolished graphics and annoyingly jerky 3D don't do the eyes many favours, and neither does the tendency to fade out the background detail whenever the ball is in motion. Overall, the graphics are functional rather than decorative, as is the minimal sound - but then what do you want from a golf game, a five-man rap outfit jamming in the background?

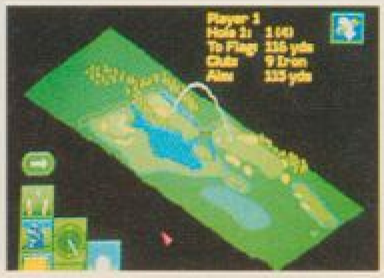
RELEASE DETAILS

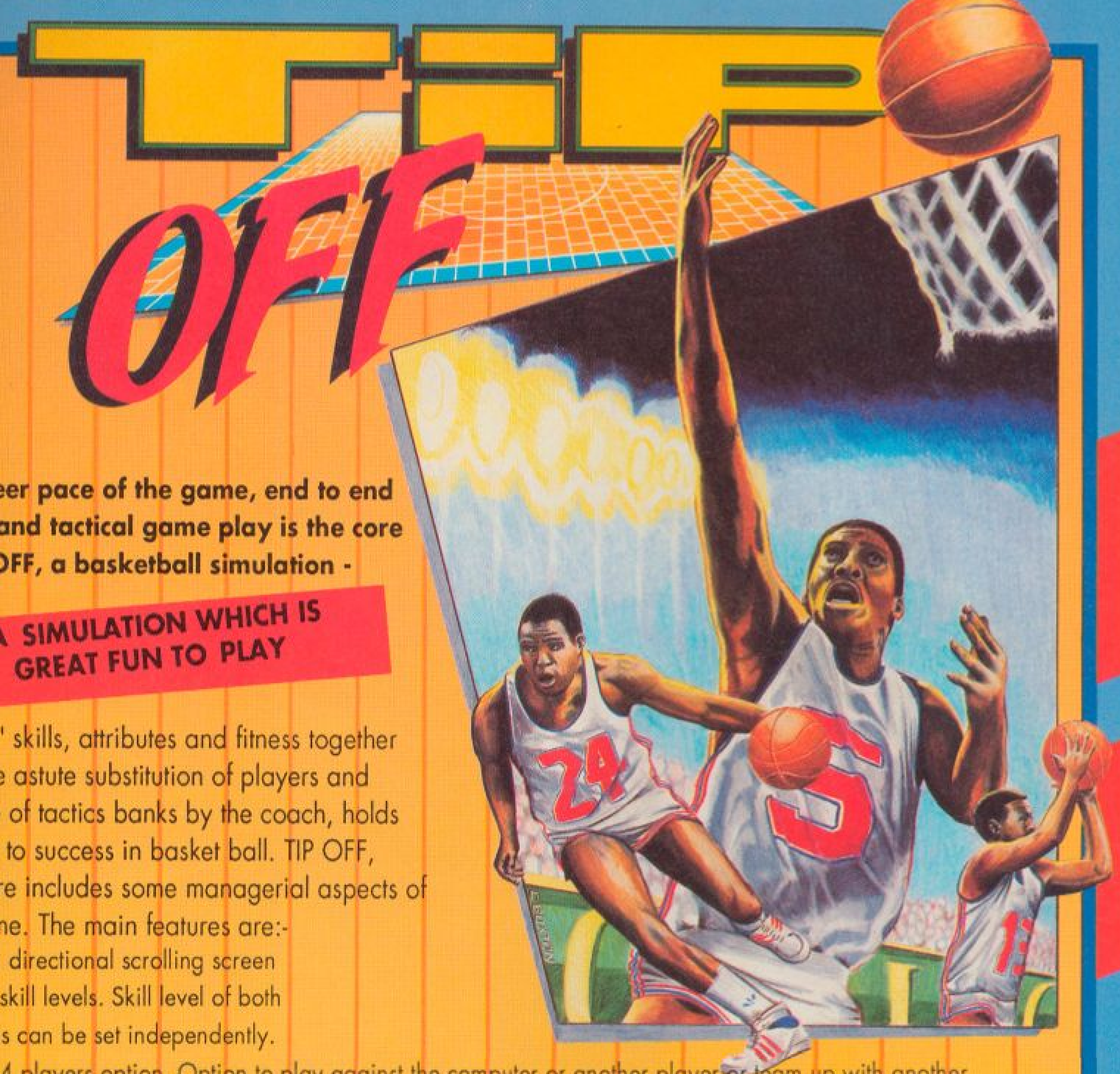
AMIGA	£34.99	October
ATARI ST	£34.99	October
IBM PC	£34.99	January

That last shot sent you 93 yards, according to this post-shot report. Unfortunately you stopped just a few feet short of the green, so another chip is required.



Position your shot using his handy 3D map view. Ideal for long shots, it becomes less useful when playing at close range. The map can be viewed from any of four angles.





The sheer pace of the game, end to end action and tactical game play is the core of TIP OFF, a basketball simulation -

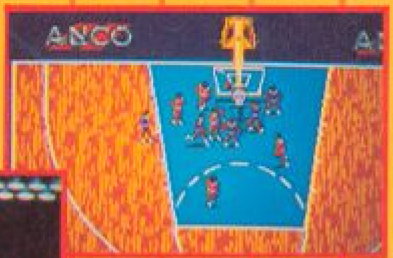
A SIMULATION WHICH IS GREAT FUN TO PLAY

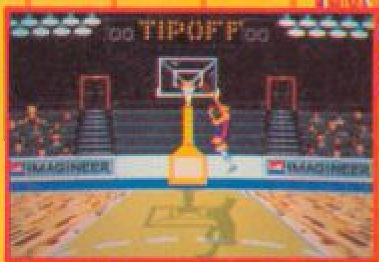
Players' skills, attributes and fitness together with the astute substitution of players and change of tactics banks by the coach, holds the key to success in basket ball. TIP OFF, therefore includes some managerial aspects of the game. The main features are:-

* Multi directional scrolling screen
* Five skill levels. Skill level of both teams can be set independently.
* 1 to 4 players option. Option to play against the computer or another player or team up with another player against the computer or another player or two players.
* Facility to practice skills and tactics.
* Facility to create a team at all skill levels and design tactics.
* Instinctive Joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot or do a dummy. There are two running speeds, two types of dribbling and passing and five types of shots at the basket (Jump shot, Hook shot, Skyhook, Running Jump shot and Slam Dunk).
* Each player on the court is an individual with a unique mixture of attributes (Age, Height, Flair, Pace, Stamina and Composure) and skills (Passing, Dribbling, Stealing, Shooting and Jumping).
* Two types of Leagues. Action Replay at 3 speeds.
* Extra moves are available using two independent button joysticks using the EXORLENCE System.

AMIGA ATARI ST -
IBM PC & COMPATIBLES
PRICE - £25.99

IMAGINEER
ANCO





Amiga Screenshot's Shown

EASY TO PLAY - HARD TO MASTER

Published by
ANCO Software Ltd

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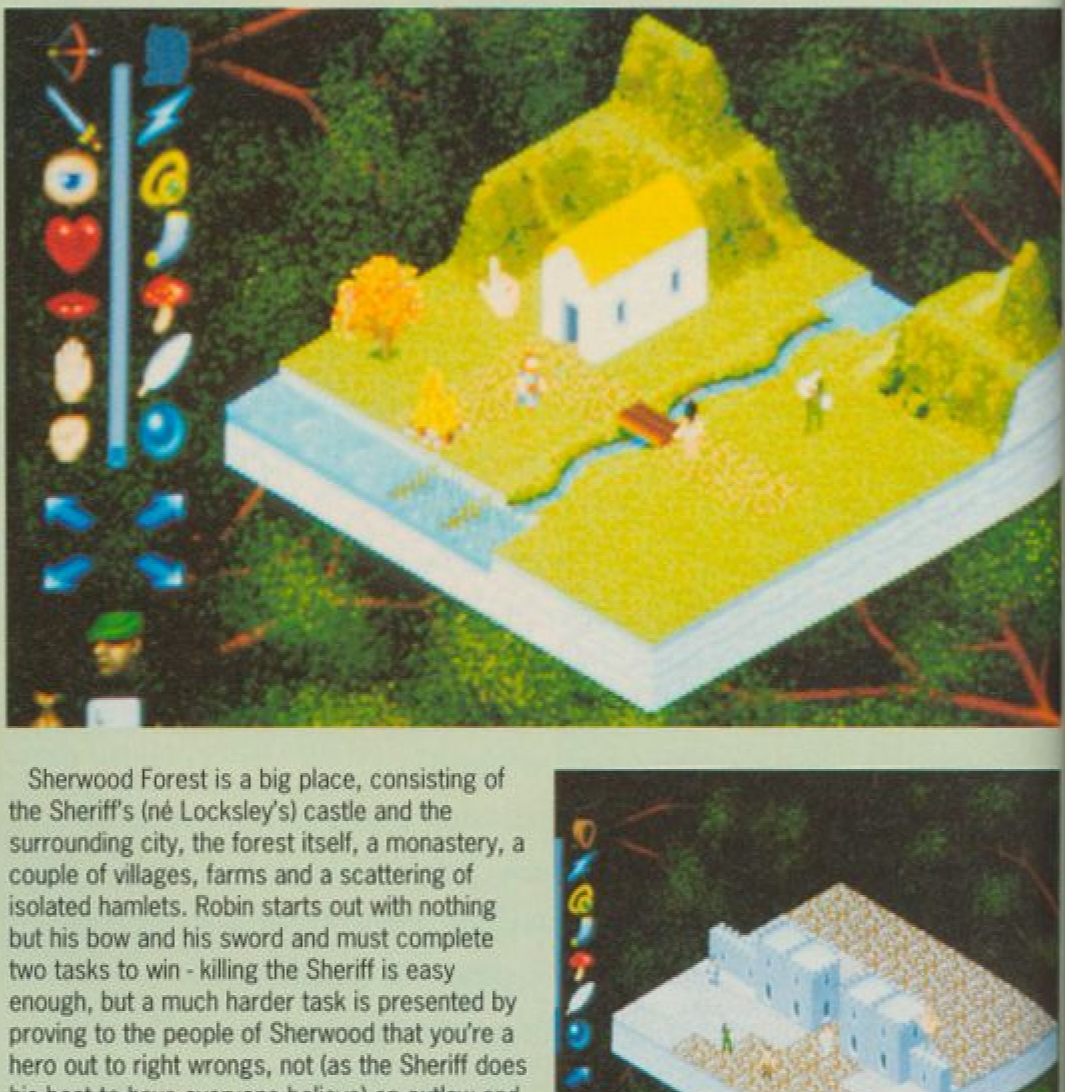
8 Millside Industrial Estate, Lawson Road, Dartford, Kent, DA1 5BH Tel: 0322 292513/8 Fax: 0322 293422

ROBIN HOOD

MILLENNIUM jumps on the Sherwood bandwagon - *Populous* style.

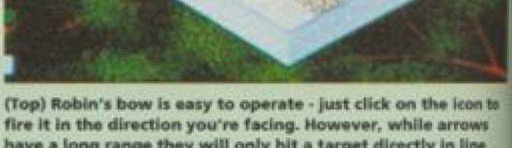


Well, there can't have been a better time to release a Robin Hood game. Sherwood fever is currently sweeping the UK, what with Kevin Costner strutting his armour-plated stuff on the big screen in *Prince of Thieves*, while the Bryan Adams theme music tops the charts. Yes, everyone's gone Hood crazy - and here he is on your monitor screen. What a guy.

So far as scenario is concerned, Millennium has gone for the classic approach, rather than the slightly altered telling that both of the recent cinematic efforts offer. The opening sequence sets the scene: while Robin of Locksley and his servants enjoy a sunny day in Sherwood Forest, in comes the moustache-twiddling Sheriff of Nottingham and his Norman men to break up the party, strip Robin of his title and assume control of his castle and the surrounding lands. Of course, Robin is none too pleased about this, especially when his people desert him, and so he embarks on a one-man quest to get back what is rightfully his and restore freedom to the beleaguered land.

At first glance, and certainly from these screenshots, *Robin Hood* looks suspiciously like a rather cynical *Populous* rip-off. Further inspection, however, reveals this not to be the case, and it is in fact a very enjoyable and innovative arcade adventure cum strategy game cum RPG. So far as the graphic representation is concerned though, there can be little doubt that *Populous* was a source of inspiration somewhere along the line.

Sherwood Forest is a big place, consisting of the Sheriff's (né Locksley's) castle and the surrounding city, the forest itself, a monastery, a couple of villages, farms and a scattering of isolated hamlets. Robin starts out with nothing but his bow and his sword and must complete two tasks to win - killing the Sheriff is easy enough, but a much harder task is presented by proving to the people of Sherwood that you're a hero out to right wrongs, not (as the Sheriff does his best to have everyone believe) an outlaw and a thief. This is achieved by embarking on the classic Hood campaign of robbing from the rich to give to the poor. There are plenty of fat merchant types to take gold from, and no short supply of poor peasant folk to give it to. By doing so, along with other acts like killing Normans and rescuing people from the noose, you increase your popularity - the most vital factor in the game. Without it your acts will be frowned on by the people, and the job of the Sheriff is made that much easier.



(Top) Robin's bow is easy to operate - just click on the icon to fire it in the direction you're facing. However, while arrows have a long range they will only hit a target directly in line with Robin, so care must be taken when setting up a shot, especially if firing on a Norman guard - If you're caught, you'll be promptly taken to the Sheriff, and then sent to the gallows. Not a pretty sight.

(Above) The seasons change as the game progresses, meaning harder times in colder climes. The graphics change accordingly, and it's particularly difficult to see things in the snow-covered winters.

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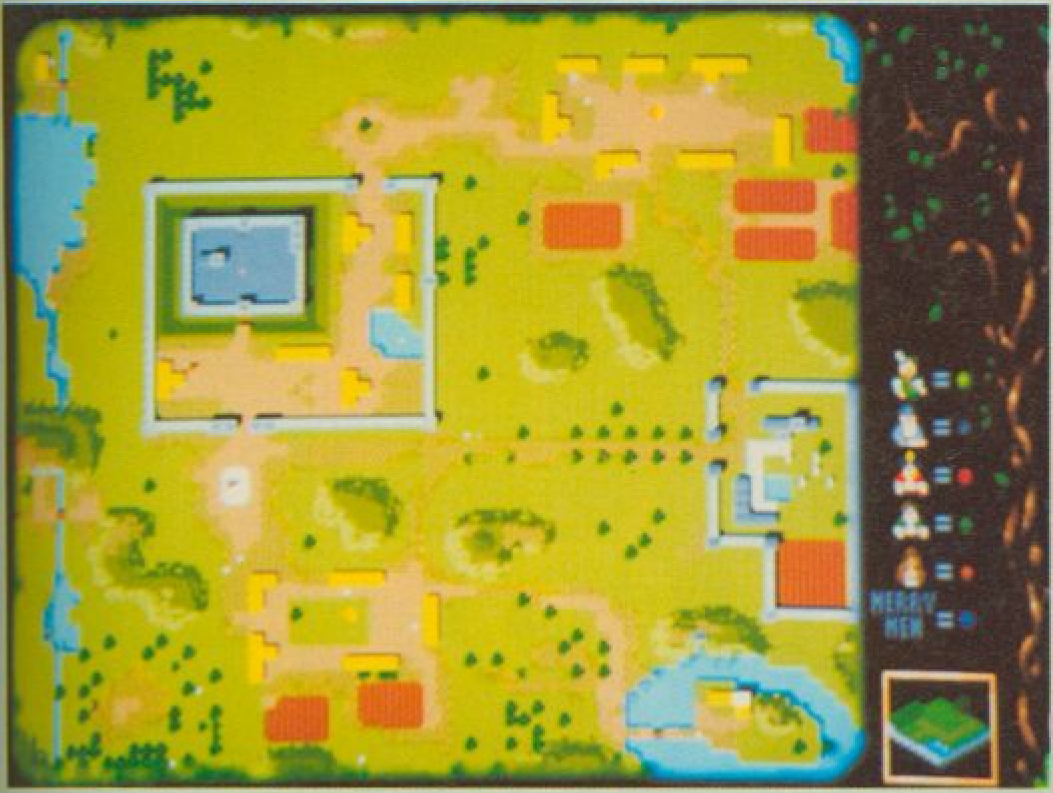
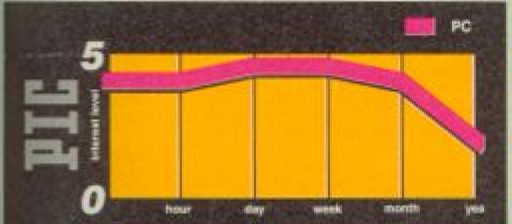


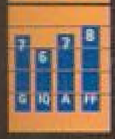
(Left) The crystal ball given to you by the old wizard provides this handy map. Colour-coded dots show the current positions of everybody in the forest.



Instinctive control and a desire to right the wrongs of Sherwood gets you involved right from the start, and there's always something going on to keep you interested. Until, at least, you win, and then there's unlikely to be any compulsion to return. A right hoot while it lasts, though.

ACE RATING

820

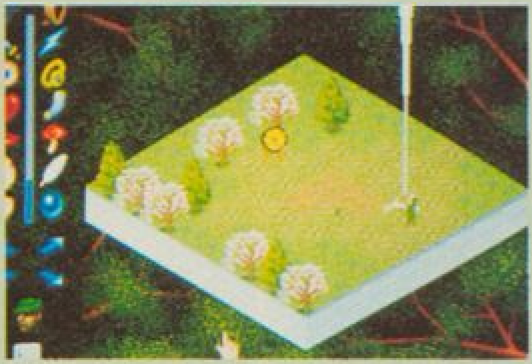


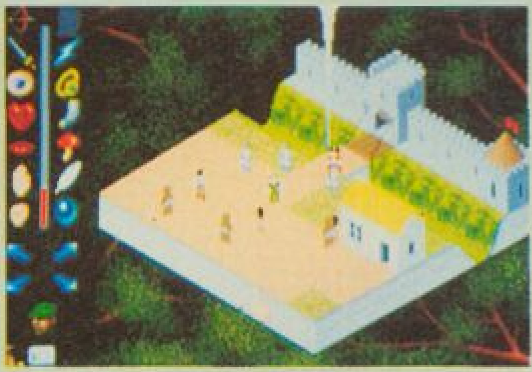
IBM PC

The VGA graphics are very pretty indeed - Sherwood Forest is lovely and colourful, and the animation on the people gives them genuine character. The only problem is the scrolling, which can be annoyingly jerky at times.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£30.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£25.99	October
ATARI ST	£25.99	October





(Left) While everyone in Sherwood Forest has a life of their own, Robin too will do his own thing if left alone. If he hears a cry for help, he will respond. If there's nothing to do at all, he'll pop down to the woods for a spot of archery practice. Helpful this, as the more practice Robin puts in, the faster he'll be able to reload his bow in a real combat situation.

(Below Left) Character interaction and dialogue takes place through comic-style speech bubbles. It's important to listen to what people say, especially when it's the Sheriff making one of his regular public proclamations, as these can affect the course of the whole game.

While the majority of people in the game (soldiers, peasants and so on) are effectively extras with little scope for interaction, there are a number of supporting roles that play an important part in the proceedings. Maid Marian is of course in evidence (she's the Sheriff's daughter) and there's a neat sub-plot in operation as you have to woo her - which basically consists of you paying her enough attention for the two of you to fall in love. And the trio of Merry Men - Little John, Will Scarlet and Friar Tuck - can all be enlisted to help you in your campaign, providing you can find them. As long as your popularity is high enough, they can be ordered to rob and kill for you, and, if summoned properly, will even rush to your side if you find yourself in peril. There's also a cackling old wizard who presents you with a crystal ball (essentially an overhead map of the forest which allows you to keep tabs on people) and offers cryptic advice.

One of the game's most important aspects, especially if you want to get anywhere, is the acquisition of special objects. As you interact with the characters and participate in mini-scenarios, you're given useful items, among them a magical ring that allows you to see what any character is thinking and, one of the most useful, a monk's habit disguise - especially handy when you've been outlawed and the Sheriff's men are out looking for you.

It's becoming increasingly rare these days that we see something that's both original and fun to play, and *Robin Hood* fits snugly into that category. It's easy to get into thanks to the instinctive icon control, and because much effort has gone into creating a mini social structure in Sherwood Forest, there's a real sense of a world going on around you. The peasants hunt animals and chop wood for fires, women bathe in the river and monks collect and give proper funerals to the dead.

While character interaction is minimal, personalities are vivid - the fat merchants are cowardly and beg for their life when robbed, the merry men are suitably heroic and so on.

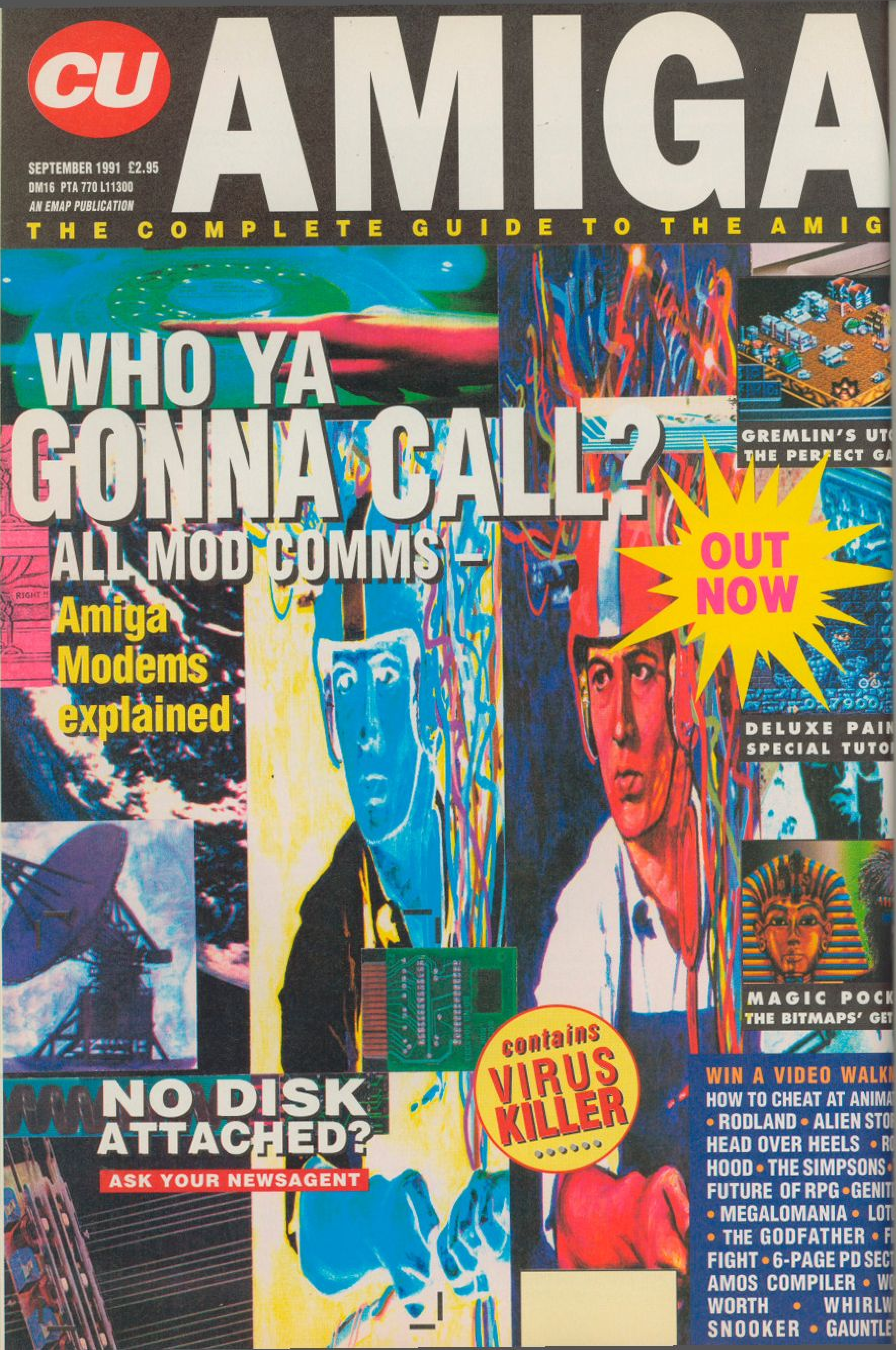
Furthermore, the whole thing has a very cinematic feel at times - such as when an undercover mission into the Sheriff's castle goes wrong, and you're chased by the Normans through the town square. There's a strong atmosphere that serves to hold everything together, and this is strengthened by the 'cute' character graphics and an element of humour that comes through in the dialogue.

Possibly one of its nicest features though, is that you can play the game however you like - if you don't fancy righting wrongs and want to be a bit of a rogue instead, there's nothing to stop you from just walking around, putting arrows in the backs of peasant women and hacking farmworkers down with your sword. But don't expect the people to love you for it.

The game is not without its shortcomings though - it would have been nice to have more control over the bow and arrows for instance, and in a broader vein, there are times when you get the impression that more could have been done with the game, that it could have been bigger, with more to do and more interaction. The central game idea certainly had more potential than has been realised here.

These, however, are only minor distractions, and what we have here is a very nice game indeed - primarily because it's simply a lot of fun to play, and very absorbing as such. Get this and you'll be a very merry man.

● **Gary Whitta**



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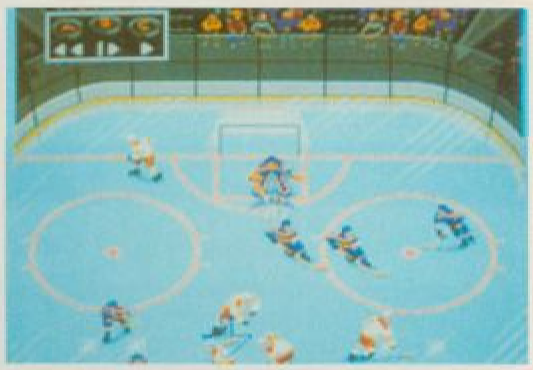
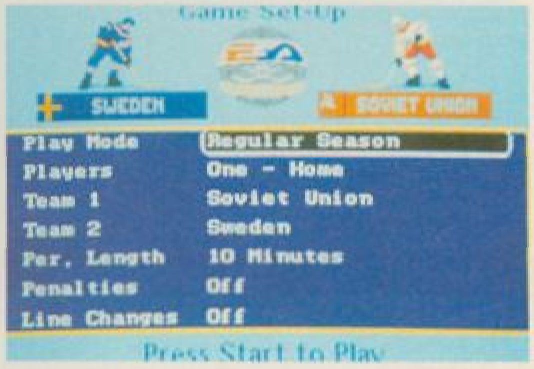
EA HOCKEY

There's nothing quite like an ice hockey match to get the rawest of human emotions on display. ELECTRONIC ARTS unveil their latest winner.





Play Mode Regular Season
Players One - Home
Team 1 Soviet Union
Team 2 Sweden
Per. Length 10 Minutes
Penalties Off
Line Changes Off

Press Start to Play

(Top) Sweeping in to attack in a particularly exciting moment. Only the goal-keeper and the three defenders stand between Our Boys and a score.

(Above) Flexibility in the options is an important element of *EA Hockey's* success.

After stunning the console world with the incredible *John Madden's Football* earlier this year, Park Place Productions have diverted their attentions to a different and even more violent Stateside sport. The result is *EA Hockey*... and it's another scorcher.

The title screen sports a series of options that let you change the length of the game, choose what sort of game you want to play (either a one-off or a knockout play-off), select a team from the list of sixteen (Soviet Union and USA are the best - Great Britain and Spain are hopeless), choose whether it's a one or two-player game (either head-to-head or two players on the same team) and turn off penalties and line rules (i.e. play the game properly or turn it into a horrendous orgy of blatant violence).

Once the options have been set, it's time to puck off. Controlling the players is very simple (pass and shoot when you're on the puck and speed-up and barge/tackle when you're not) and consequently the game is very easy to get into. But although the control method is a breeze to use, it's beautifully designed and gives expert players the scope to really develop their skills. A novice can skate around, pass the puck and even score goals... but a real ace can string together blindingly fast passing plays, crush players against the barrier, shoulder barge them to the ground and even shoot the puck at an opponent and knock him flying!

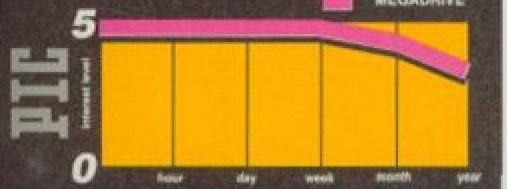
Once you start roughing up opponents, it's only a matter of time before a fight breaks out. When one does, both players involved throw their gloves to the ground and face off, ready to beat seven shades out of one another. Three moves are available with which to beat the opponent - hold, face punch and stomach punch - and the object is to floor the opponent before the referee intervenes. After that, if the penalty option is off, play continues with a face off. If penalties are on, both combatants are sent to the Sin Bin to cool off for a few minutes!

Scoring is a tricky affair because, like in *Kick Off 2*, the computer-controlled goalies are no dummies. However, when you do get one in the net, you can access the REPLAY option and watch your glorious effort in slow motion - and then rewind it and watch it again to really cheese off your opponent!

There are few sports simulations that can be called truly classic games; *John Madden's Football* and *Kick Off* are two of the very best. I also think that *Ice Hockey* should join them. Not just because it perfectly captures the blistering pace, the atmosphere and sheer bone-crunching action of the sport. And not just because it's incredibly enjoyable, packs a tough challenge, and has massive potential for players to really develop their on-screen ice hockey skills. And not just because it features brilliant graphics and sounds.

No, the reason it desrves classic status is simply because it's such a supremely playable game. It has that timeless quality that'll keep you going back to it months - even years - after you first played the game. If you're a Megadrive-owning sports fan, this is an essential purchase.

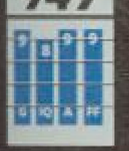
● **Julian Rignall**



A spectacular sports game which fully captures the atmosphere and sheer violence of ice hockey. It's very easy to get into, thanks to simple controls, but has massive scope for experts to develop a truly awesome playing style.

ACE RATING

949

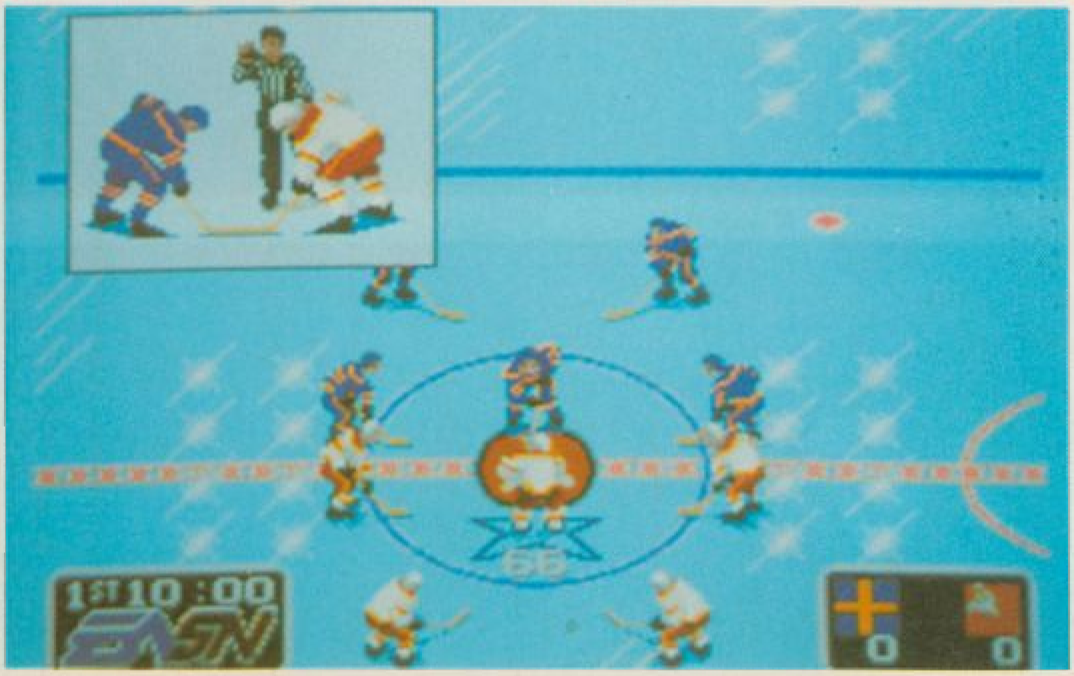


MEGADRIVE

Sports games don't come any better than this. Ice Hockey ranks alongside *John Madden's Football* and *Kick Off 2* as one of the best sports simulations available. A Megadrive must.

RELEASE DETAILS

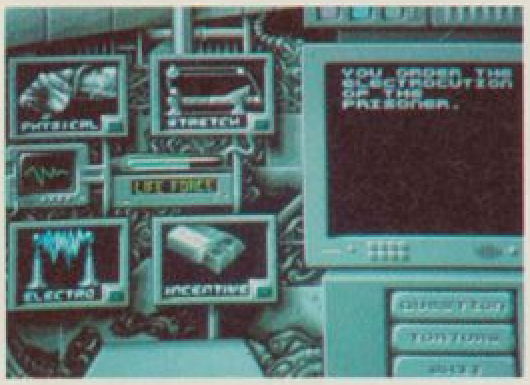
MEGADRIVE £34.99 OUT NOW



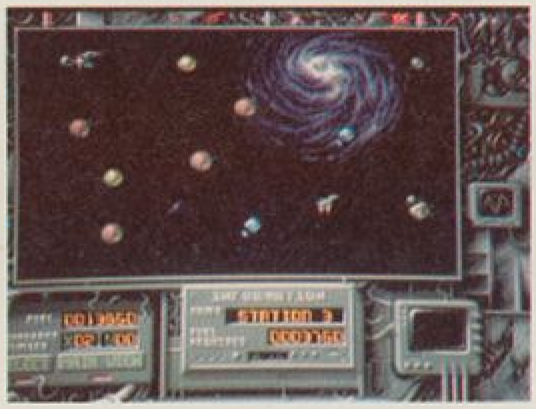
THE EXECUTIONER

HAWK's *Oids* clone bears a rock-hard title. But will you lose your head over the gameplay?

Unusually, games of the *Thrust* genre are pretty few and far between. Apart from *Oids*, the most recent effort was *Zarathrusta* which possessed flashier graphics but lacked some of the playability that made the former a classic.



YOU ORDER THE ELECTROCUTION OF THE PRISONER.



The Executioner's attractive (if small) sprites and backdrops are marred by the unforgivably jerky scrolling.

The Executioner is Hawk's attempt to improve on the idea. As in most inertia-driven games, horizontal joystick movements control rotation, while forward activates thrust and in this case pulling back activates a 'Tractor ball' which allows you to collect objects on the planet's surface.

Via a relatively bland intro sequence you are informed by the Emperor himself that you must 'execute' the evil leader of the Gargaroths. Unfortunately your task is hampered by the fact that his current location within the galaxy is unknown. To find him you must find four segments of an electronic key.

The galaxy is split into twelve sectors and in each lies a space station, a shop and about ten planets. The plethora of landscapes include all the usual; metallic, organic, stone, etc. Dotted around the landscapes are pods which shoot at you and sometimes launch ships, these take a form suitable to the current environment. Also to be found are fuel pods, stranded pilots (who can be rescued), and, if your lucky, a key segment.

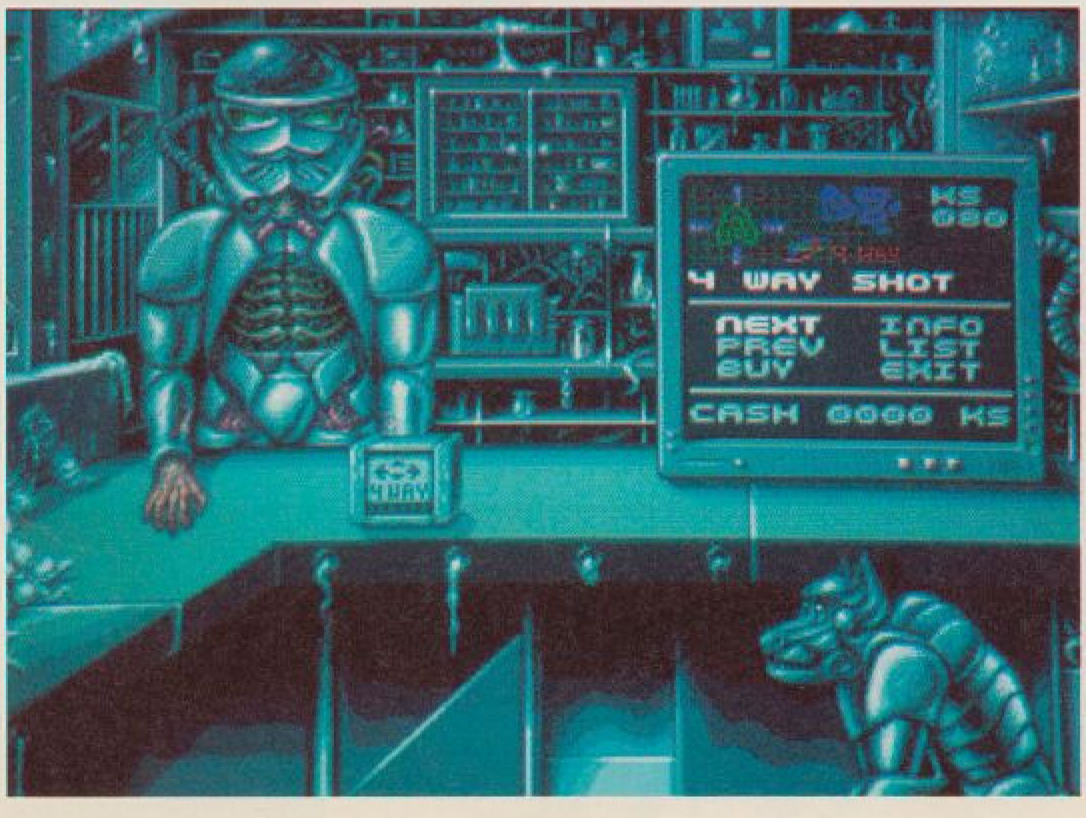
Searching every planet for the pieces would take you a lifetime so to make things easier you can question any captives (these the pilots you 'rescued') when at a space station. If they are proving a bit stubborn, then there are numerous methods available to you with which to loosen their tongues. Bribery is one option but unfortunately (for the captive) money is pretty scarce and can only be obtained by selling your prisoners. For the those who don't mind a touch of sadism 'Torture' is both more effective and cheaper. This takes three forms: Beating, Stretching and Electrocution. Each when picked lowers the Lifeforce bar of the captive, the lower it gets the less money you get when they're sold should it fall to zero before he talks, he dies taking his secrets to the grave.

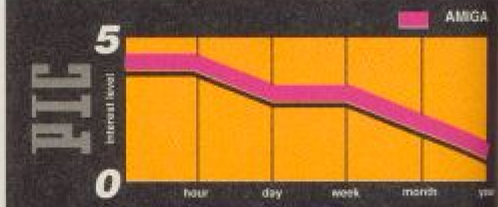
Amassing cash is useful as it allows you to equip your droid ships with a wide variety of equipment. These include 2-Way, 4-Way, pod scanner, terrain scanner, fuel and Power shot. Annoyingly these are lost when your current droid is destroyed, which due to the lack of shields, damage bar or any other protective device takes only one shot.

I must admit that the scenery graphics are a lo better than I expected, being colourful and well shaded, and they convey the atmosphere effectively. However, as we all know, graphics alone do not a great game make, and it is in the other departments that the game falls short. Sound is very poor with a few beeps and bangs; the Torture sequence has no effects whatsoever and could have been a lot better had a few meaty sounds been included, such as screams and sounds appropriate to the method.

Playability suffers due to the fact that most of the planets are tiny (i.e. two screens wide) and they really aren't complicated enough, with just one route to take. Its also too easy to die; in one case I had found a segment in one of the most difficult worlds and was destroyed just on the way out, and had to do it again (needless to say couldn't be bothered).

● **Khalid Howlad**

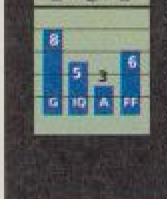




Initially quite enjoyable, but ennui soon sets in, and there just isn't enough gameplay variety on offer to bring you back. The annoying 'One hit and you're dead' difficulty doesn't help encourage perserverance either. After the long struggle to find the first key, you may well feel you can't really be bothered to hunt down the others.

ACE RATING

734



AMIGA

The Executioner had plenty of potential (as with a *Thrust* game), but it just wasn't realised. The graphi are good but these day's it's what you expect from any decent Amiga title. Sound effects are abysmal and are an insult to the Amiga's capabilities.

The scrolling is pretty jerky and again one expec a lot more from today's titles. The basic playability there and can be quite addictive, but is pretty flawed.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£TBA	OUT NOW

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- ★ 1 to 4 players option (Amiga & ST)
- ★ Kit Design (Amiga, Atari ST & IBM)
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THE ONE - *Ultimate soccer simulation.* 96%.

THE ACE - *Brilliant. Buy, Boy, Buy.* 930.

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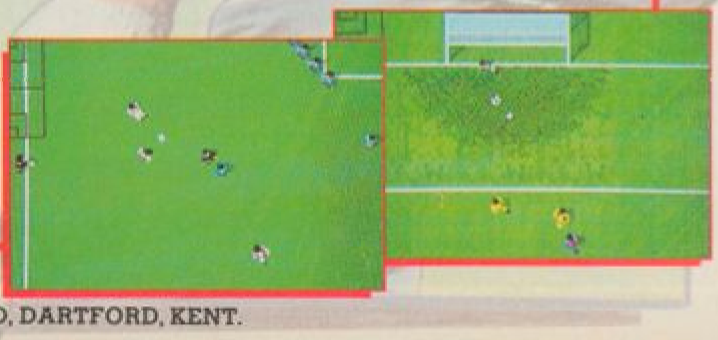
KICK OFF 2 (Expanded Amiga)	£24.99



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JAMES 'BUSTER' DOUGLAS KNOCKOUT BOXING

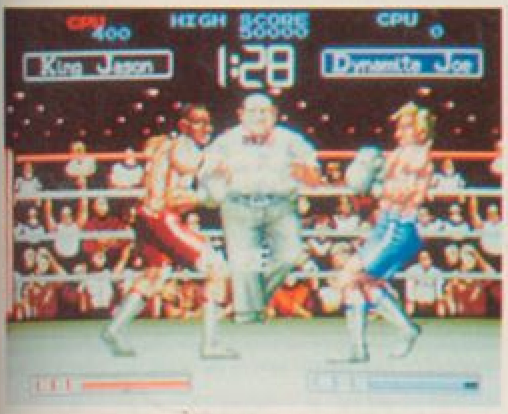
CPU 5120
HIGH SCORE 50000
CPU 880
Fernando Gomez
1:26
Kim Nang
PAUSE

More a featherweight amateur than a heavyweight champ, 'Buster' is on the ropes.

If you've taken a look at the screenshots and have noticed that *James 'Buster' Douglas Knockout Boxing* bears a remarkable resemblance to the *Final Blow* arcade game, then award yourself a pat on the back. The game was originally released as *Final Blow* in Japan. By the time it reached the American shores, Sega decided that they needed a famous sportsman to endorse the game so that it would fit nicely alongside the other products in their sports range (*Arnold Palmer's Golf, Tommy Lasorda's Baseball* and *Joe Montana's Football*), so James 'Buster' Douglas was picked, and it's his shiny bald head that greets you when you boot up.

The game itself is a very simple one. No fancy moves. No fancy viewpoints. No fancy anything, really. Just a side-on view of two ugly boxers standing toe to toe ready to slug it out. The controls are very simple - push the joypad up and 'Buster' does a high uppercut or face punch; push it down and it's the same, only to the stomach.

Playing the game is merely a case of hammering the buttons as fast as you can. There's very little skill involved, and I got to the very last fighter (the eighth) on my first go without reading the instructions, and without really concentrating on what I was doing. It's very easy - just wallop the buttons and occasionally move your boxer towards the opponent and you're on the gravy train to knockout central.

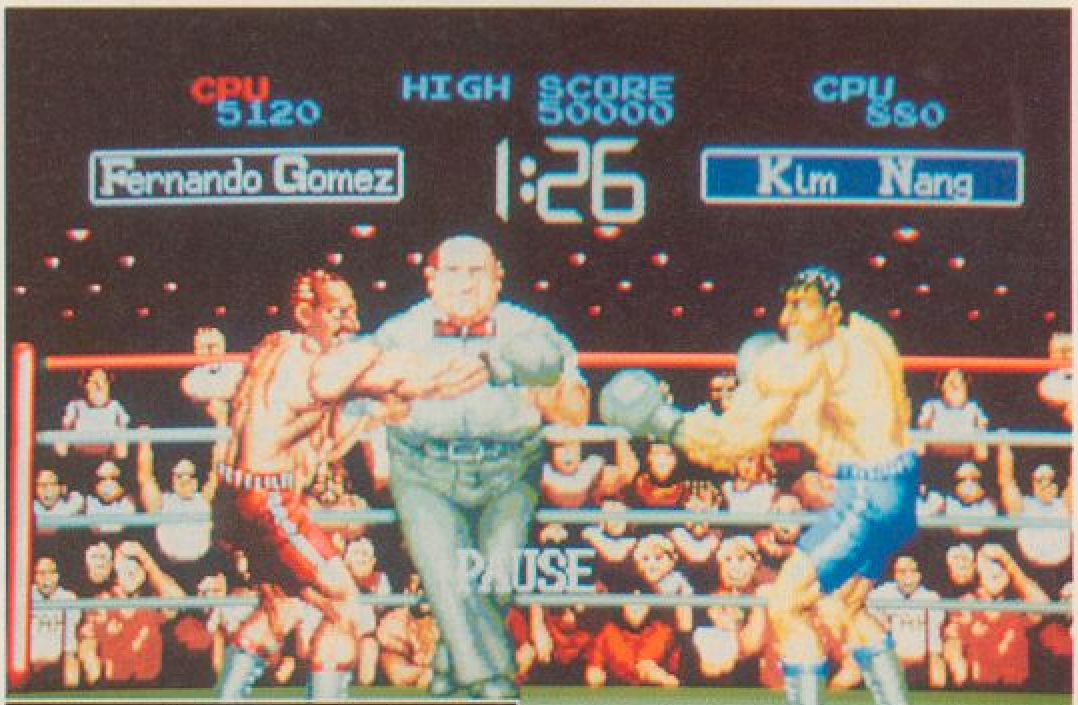


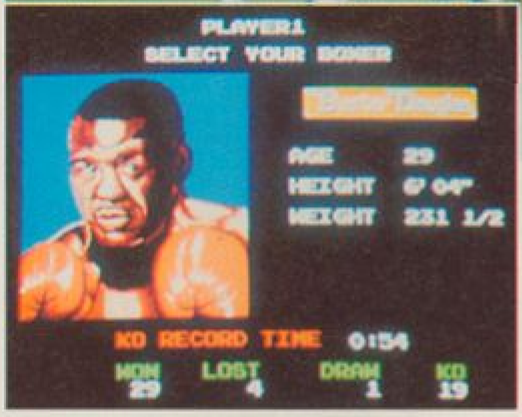
This tactic works fine for the first seven opponents and gives you easy first round victories. Then, all of a sudden, the eighth boxer gets very difficult, and you actually need to adopt a few simple tactics. But it doesn't take long to suss him out, and once you've beaten him you've mastered the game.

James 'Buster' Douglas Knockout Boxing doesn't even have any saving graces in the form of graphics or sounds. The boxers are big, but they're horribly ugly with muscles growing out of every orifice. They're also badly animated, and move their legs in a very strange, twitching way, almost as if they've just had a Barium enema and are shuffling to the toilet to let it all drop out. Sound too, is poor, with laughable punching noises and the most feeble of tunes.

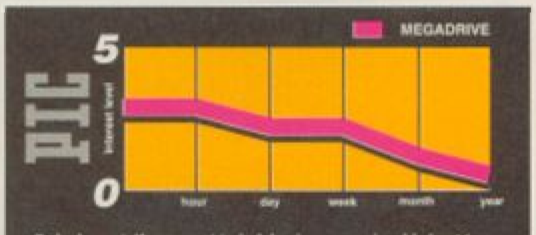
So it's a sad day for Megadrive pugilists. *James 'Buster' Douglas* is a very poor game which offers little in the way of enjoyable boxing action, and simply hasn't got the playability or challenge to go the distance.

● **Julian Rignall**





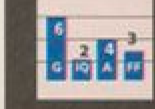
(Above) Fernando Gomez and Kim Nang come to blows in the first round of this "friendly" bout. Neither boxer is close enough to land a punch at this point, and Nang would do well to keep his distance, at least until he can recoup some of his energy.
(Left) Choose your boxer, then your opponent. Due to the slug-it-out simplicity of the game itself, who you choose doesn't really make much of a difference - it's all a matter of taste, really.



To be honest, if you want to indulge in some enjoyable beat-'em-up action then look elsewhere. *James 'Buster' Douglas Knockout Boxing* is a very limited and poorly executed game which you'll get bored of within a few hours.

ACE RATING

410

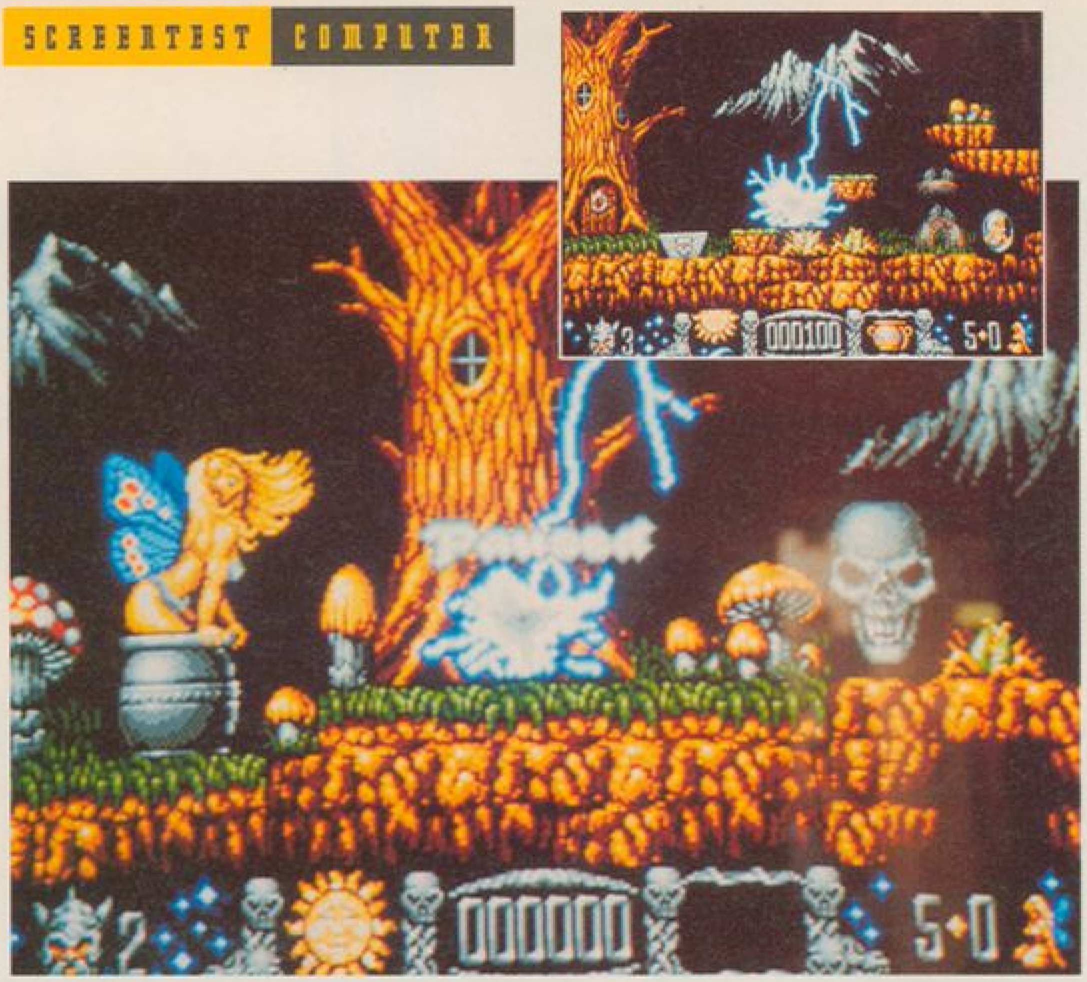


MEGADRIVE

Originally released eighteen months ago as *Final Blow* - and it wasn't considered a particularly good game then - *James 'Buster' Douglas Knockout Boxing* has very little on offer. The graphics are poor, playability is limited and the game's a pushover

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE	£34.99	OUT NOW



(Main picture)
The graphics are, of course, extremely attractive. Interesting to note that in this new higher-definition version, the flaxen-haired fairy has developed a brassiere.

(Inset)
Standing on the platforms will summon a huge eagle to whisk the player off to a different stage of the game. A neat trick but a novelty which wears pretty thin after a couple of rides.

(Bottom)
Level 2. The heat! The danger! The same as level one but with different graphics!

STORMLORD

A visual treat on 16-bit formats, *Stormlord* is equally attractive on the Megadrive, but has the gameplay improved?

Stormlord was first introduced onto the 8-bit computer formats by Hewson, followed by the 16-bit incarnations. It was widely acclaimed as a very good game indeed, and now Razorsoft have taken the opportunity of producing a Megadrive version, improving graphically on its forebears, while maintaining the familiar gameplay.

An evil old crone has rounded up all the fair princesses in the valley of the Enchanted Realm. Her plans for the princesses are unclear, but are certainly best stopped. Anyhow, for whatever reason, the old crone scattered the fair maidens throughout the land, imprisoned in little bubbles. The player's mission, of course, is to free them.

This, however, is no merry little jaunt through the Enchanted Realm - in fact there's nothing enchanted about this realm at all, it's filled with vicious killer bees, evil wizards, undead skeletons and other creatures all intent on giving you a hard time. If you do succeed in your mission, you will be rewarded by being talked about by everyone in an admiring way and, if you're really lucky, a snog with one of the princesses. Hurrah!

Those brave enough to venture into the Realm should prepare themselves for an eight-way scrolling, thumping, bumping arcade adventure.

As you stride purposefully through the unimaginable number of levels, a-massacring and a-slaughtering as you go, you will be forced to solve puzzles in order to proceed. These teasers can range from the easy to the downright frustrating, but normally you will figure them out because they're all very logical.

For example, if you are stopped from reaching an entombed princess by a swarm of killer bees, simply find a pot of honey and exchange it for another object in the bee's vicinity. As soon as you do, the bees will go for the pot, leaving you to go for the princess. Problem solved. I said exchange the honey because you can't just drop anything you're carrying, you have to swap it with something else first. It may sound a bit strange, but it works quite well. A small indicator at the bottom of the screen allows you to see how many princesses you have freed, along with a time limit, lives remaining, an object inventory window and your score.

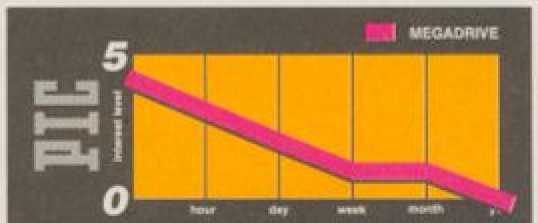
After completing a level, you will be presented with a bonus stage, in which you may gain extra points and even lives. This stage is played by intercepting princesses who, still entrapped in their bubbles, are falling slowly to their doom. There are no monsters bothering you, so you cannot shoot or jump. You must simply walk around rescuing princesses. Hmmmm...very exiting. So that's it: *Stormlord*.

Having only briefly played the original games, I'm in no position to compare and contrast them with this, But I honestly hope they're better. The main problem with *Stormlord* is that it is SO frustrating. and we're not talking hitting-the-table-quite-hard-frustrating, but throwing-the-joypad-at-the-screen-frustrating. It's not the problems that you are confronted with, they're easy, but the simple mistakes - even bugs - that are present.

One time, I'd successfully removed the bees from an area surrounding an object I needed to complete the first level by enticing them with a pot of honey, but they STILL got in my way, and managed to kill me twice. And this is not dodgy games playing by me, I can assure you. The graphics and sound serve their purpose, but both could have been much better. Most disturbing of all, however, was the discovery that the fairies in the game are now wearing bras! What a blummin' swiz.

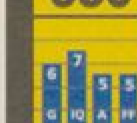
I could only recommend this game to the most ardent of arcade adventurers, or shoot-'em-up fans who hunger for something harder. It really didn't grab me, and I doubt it will anyone else.

● David Fitzgerald



When you first play it, you will enjoy yourself. At the beginning, it seems perfectly okay. However, you will slowly become more and more frustrated and inevitably you'll go through the routine of throwing the joypad at the screen. Then you'll play it on and off for about a month before finally forgetting about it.

ACE RATING
630

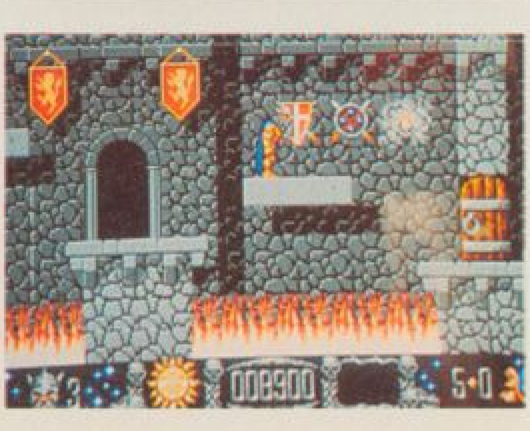


MEGADRIVE

It could have been fine if it didn't contain so many frustrating flaws. Maybe if Hewson were still up and running, it would have been better. But I can only recommend this to masochist arcade adventurers.

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE	£34.99	OUT NOW



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INTERTAINMENT '91

WING COMMANDER II

• REVENGE OF THE KILRATHI •

ORIGIN boldly goes where it's already gone before

THE STORY SO FAR: The interstellar war between the humans and the evil catlike Kilrathi continues. As the whisker-twiddling megalomaniacs try to expand their empire throughout the free galaxy, the brave young pilots of the Terran Confederation Navy fight to keep them back, and in particular from getting their claws on Earth.

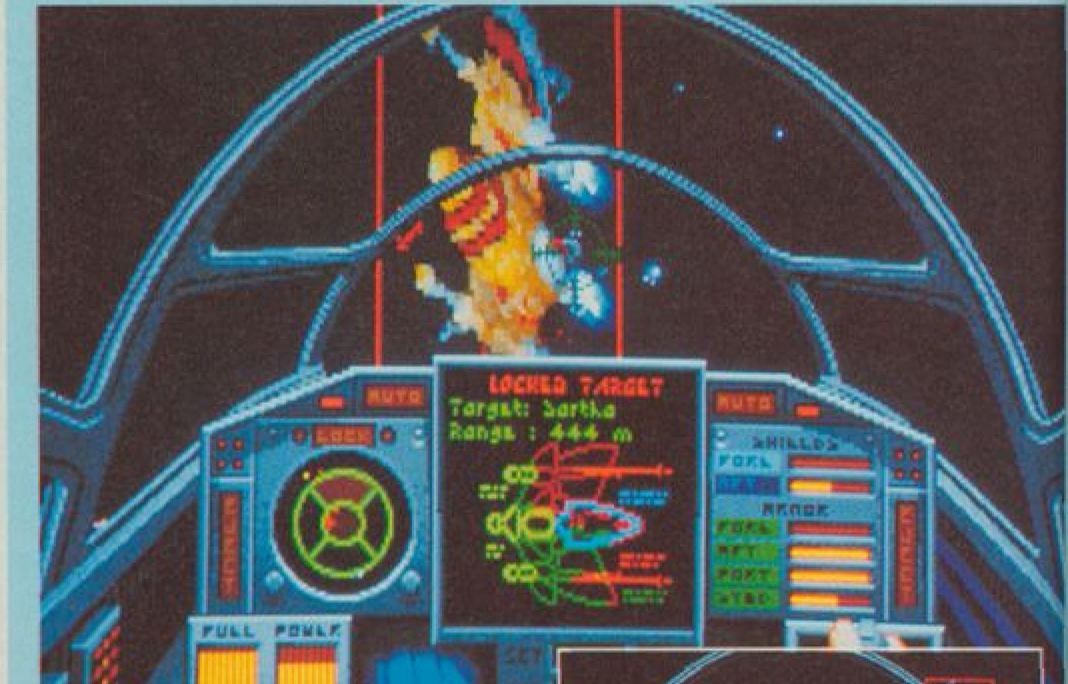
Unfortunately, the war has not been going well, the most devastating blow coming from the destruction of the TCN flagship Tiger's Claw by a squadron of state-of-the-art Kilrathi stealth fighters. Worse still, since nobody but you, a TCN fighter ace, saw the Kilrathi ships prior to the attack, you've been held responsible for the Tiger's Claw incident - and nobody wants to listen to your stories about invisible ships. However, due to a lack of evidence, your punishment remains light - demotion in rank and transfer to the security services. But you're still on active flight duty, and with the Kilrathi getting closer all the time, action is just around the corner...

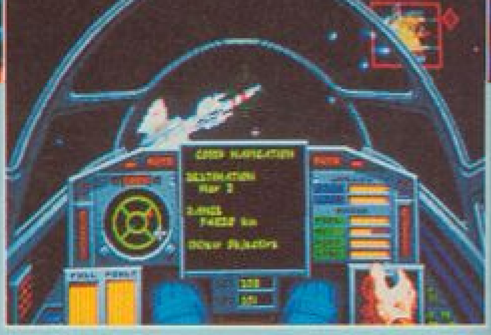
Wing Commander II is a sequel in the true cinematic tradition, carrying on the story directly from where it left off at the end of the second *Wing Commander* mission disk. But while the story is all-new, the game itself remains basically the same, albeit with a number of tweaks and enhancements. Also, the basic structure of the thing remains - there are around 30 space combat missions to fly, and in between, each a new episode of the unfolding story presents itself in the form of an animated cinematic segment.

Your performance in some missions can alter certain aspects of the story, although the central plot remains unshakable, so basically it's just a question of surviving all the missions until the pre-ordained happy ending.

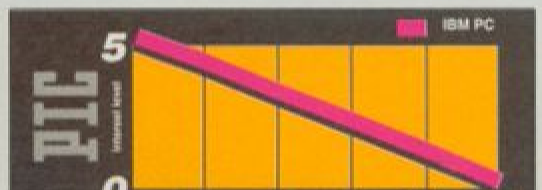
Wing Commander II's story is even more twisty-turny than the original, although the basic gist is that, armed with their new stealth fighters, the Kilrathi have devised their most diabolical plan yet to seize control of Earth. And in true action-movie style, there's a tacked-on human interest sub-plot that deals with you trying to clear your name over the Tiger's Claw disaster and deal with the pissed-off flag officers who want you booted out of the service. The story also allows for a more progressive style of gameplay - because you've been demoted, you've got to work your way back up the ranks if you want to get your hands on the larger, more powerful craft that only senior officers get to fly. The ship you fly your initial missions with, called the Ferret, is armed only with measly lasers, while bigger craft such as the Broadsword and Sabre have multi-purpose turrets that can fire lasers, missiles, torpedoes and protective chaff.

The missions themselves are wide-ranging, and change in style in accordance with the development of the plot. At the outset, when things are pretty quiet, your orders are simply to patrol, and these patrols lead to sporadic encounters with Kilrathi craft. As the war hots up, missions include escorting valuable freighter craft, protecting your own cruisers and attacking Kilrathi flagships. One of the major gameplay changes since the original *Wing Commander* is also supplied by the snaking storyline. Instead of flying missions from just one base, *WCII* sees you transferred around from various Terran ships and bases around the Galaxy. The Concordia is the new TCN flagship, but missions can also be flown





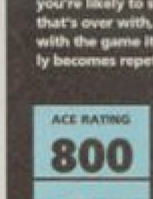
(Above) A Kilrathi ship flies past your cockpit at high velocity during a particularly hairy mission. The red square indicates that this ship is being tracked by your weapons computer as your current target. At the moment however, you're still not locked on.
(Left) Shadow, your wing-girl, chases after a Kilrathi target, which you also have targetted. You can transmit radio orders to friendly craft, telling them to attack your target if you need help.



Flashy visuals, awesome soundboard sonics and an impressive cinematic opening get you slavering from the word go - and you're likely to stay interested as long as the story unfolds. Once that's over with, however, there's little compulsion to continue with the game itself, which, without the plot to back it up, quickly becomes repetetive and, after a while, somewhat tedious.

ACE RATING

800

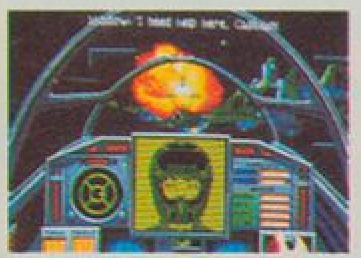


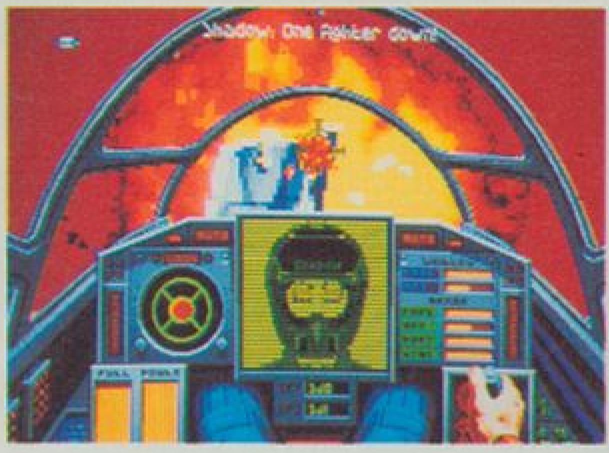
IBM PC

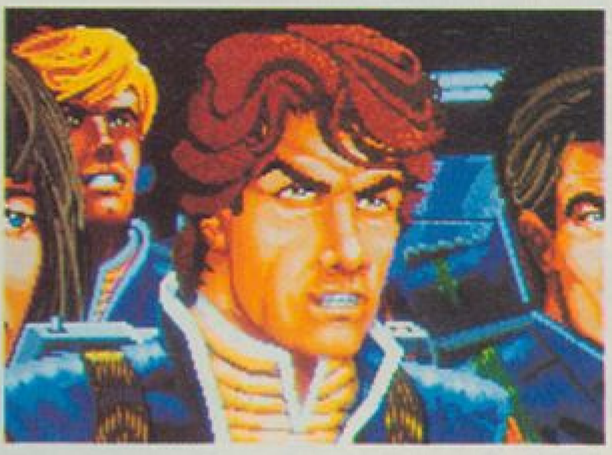
The 3D is fast (providing you're playing on a 16Meg or higher machine) and impressive, although the alien ships have a tendency to look somewhat blocky and messy. There's no faulting the sound, however, which consists of movie-quality theme music throughout and, for those with a Soundblaster card, some impressive sampled speech. The constant need to ESCape through the flashy graphics intros once you've seen them gets a bit annoying, however.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£TBA	IMMINENT

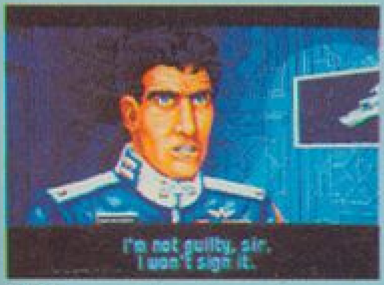






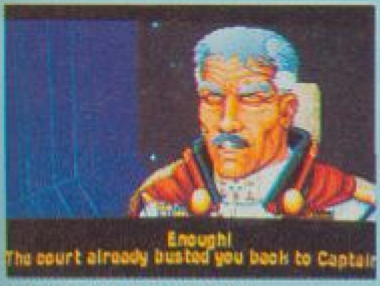
(Above) More deep-space combat, this time caught just as you finish off an unfortunate Kilrathi fighter.
(Right) Shadow killsa Kilrathi, saving you the effort.
(Far right) One of the pre-flight mission briefings, which is presented in the same cinematic style as the rest of the story.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (BUT NOT ALL OF THEM!)



I'm not guilty, sir.
I won't sign it.

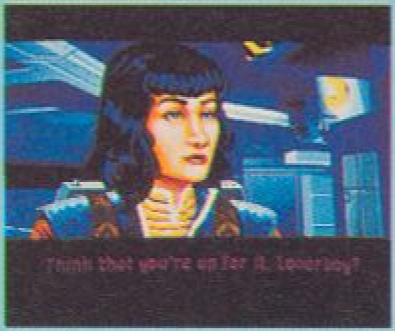
YOU
Heroic, handsome, excellent pilot, wrongly accused of causing the destruction of the Tiger's Claw. Also the Kilrathi's most feared and wanted adversarie. Also likes to mix it with those fine ladies.



Enough!
The court already busted you back to Captain

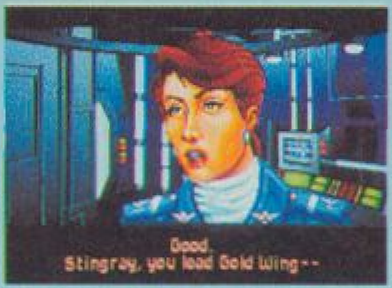
ADMIRAL TOLWYN
Top geezer at the Navy Headquarters on Earth. Hates your guts, still holds you responsible for the Tiger's Claw. Will do anything to strip you of your uniform.

LIZ 'SHADOW' NORWOOD
Your wingperson. Crack pilot, though somewhat easy to shake.

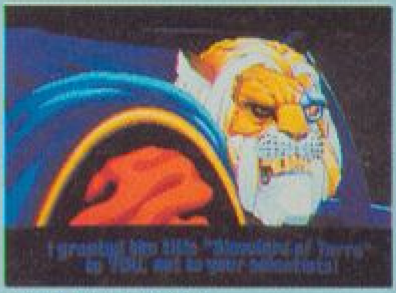


Think that you're up for it, Loverboy?

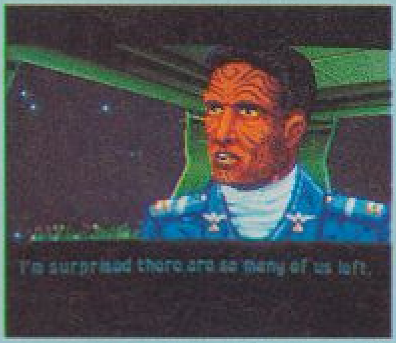
ANGEL
Tasty French bit - your wingperson in the original game, now one of the brass. She handles the mission briefings aboard the Concordia.



Good.
Stingray, you lead Gold Wing--



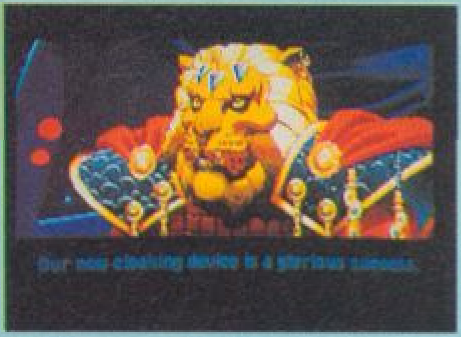
THE EMPEROR
The evil Kilrathi's supreme commander. Intent on taking over the Earth.



I'm surprised there are so many of us left.

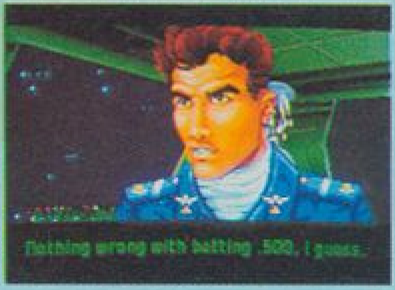
DOOMSDAY
TCN pilot with a somewhat pessimistic outlook on life. Manages to get everyone else depressed by constantly talking about death.

PRINCE THRAKHATH
The emperor's grandson. Also known as the Slavelord of Terra. Responsible for the whole of the Kilrathi fighting force.



Our new cloaking device is a glorious success.

JAZZ
Excellent pilot, arrogant, bit of a jerk. Doesn't like you, as you're the only pilot better than he is.



Nothing wrong with batting .500, I guess.

from the giant Caernarvon space station.

Combat itself is fairly simplistic and not amazingly different from that in the original, although certain things have been tarted up - the weapons targetting system, for instance, is now a whole lot more effective, coming complete with colour-coded lock-on indicators and target pippers. As opposed to the original *Wing Commander*, when targets were lost as soon as they flew off screen, the news ITTS (Improved Target Tracking System) keeps its lock even when targets are beyond visual range, highlighting its radar signal to make tracking easier.

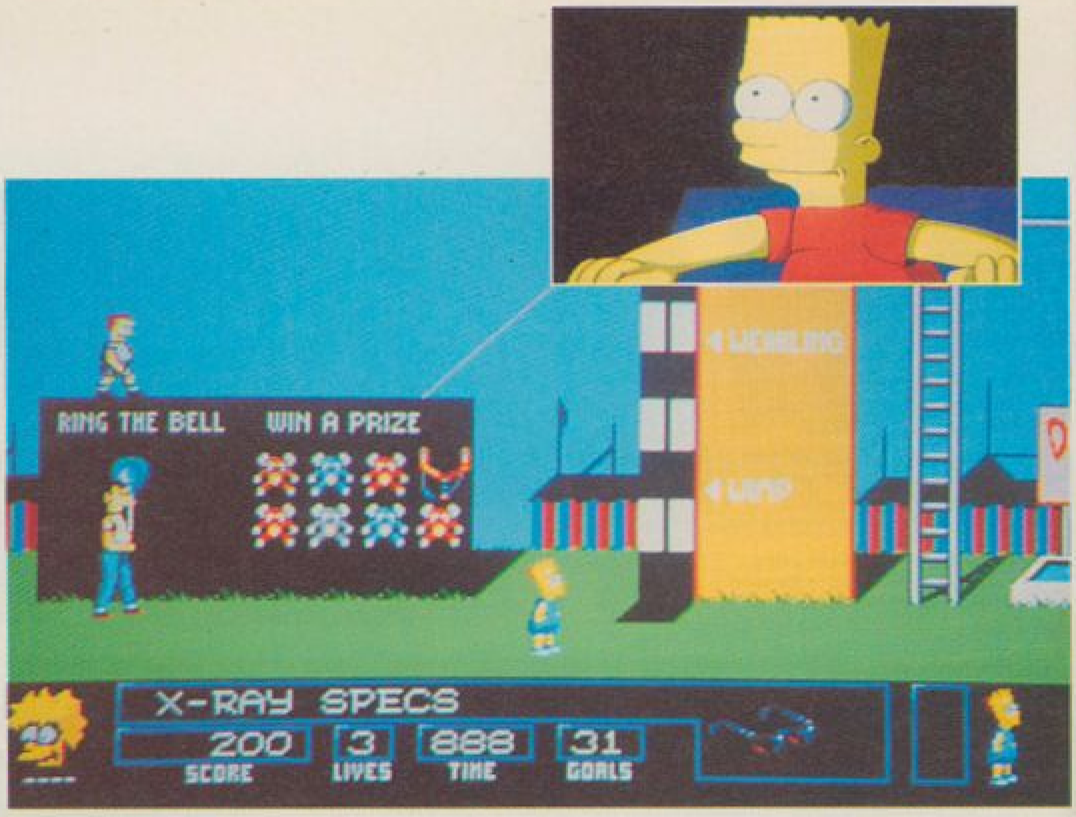
Once an enemy is in your sights however, it's more just a matter of pounding away on the space bar than applying much in the way of strategy or tactics. The whole thing is much more of a 3D shoot 'em up than flight simulation, and the action tends to be a bit on the easy side when flying missions with Shadow, your computer-controlled female wingperson, because she's so adept that nine times out of ten she's wiped out most of the Kilrathi ships before you even get a look-in!

There can be little doubt that on a technical level, *Wing Commander II* is very boss indeed. It's lovely to look at and listen to, and the episodic storyline that threads it all together works well, spurring you on to complete the mission in hand so you can see what happens next. However, as cinematic as it may be, it suffers from the same problem as the medium it's trying to emulate - once you've seen it, you've seen it, and it doesn't bear repeated viewing. Things would have been considerably improved if your actions in space affected the way the story unfolded, so as to be a proper 'interactive movie', but instead the combat has very little bearing on the big picture, bar a few limited references to the number of kills you made in the post-flight dialogue. So the task you're left with is basically just to be a good boy and survive until the end, where it's assumed the Kilrathi will be sent packing for another day.

A proper strategy element where your performance in combat would have changed the face of the war for better or worse, and the changes were reflected in the cinematic sequences would have gone a long way towards realising the potential that, for the most part, has been missed here.

These quibbles aside, *Wing Commander II* is stll an enjoyable experience, and those who got their rocks off on the first adventure will lap this up - it's effectively just a very big mission disk with a smattering of extra features. For those who look for a longer lasting experience than the short-term bells-and-whistles extravaganza that this basically amounts to would probably do best just to let the Kilrathi overrun the universe and wait for the more thoroughly overhauled *Strike Commander*. Watch this space.

● **Gary Whitta**



(Right) At the Krustyland Amusement Park, Bart can play a number of sub-games to win prizes that will help him on his mutant-thwarting quest. Many of the balloons that must be destroyed on this level float high in the sky, and can only be reached by Bart's catapult.

(Inset) An elaborate cartoon-style intro sequence sets the scene prior to play, as the space mutants land under cover of night in the Bart's back yard - and only he can stop them. Cool, man.

Has OCEAN's long-awaited licence done justice to TV's favourite family - or does it come straight from the planet cornball?

the SIMPSONS

BART VS. THE SPACE MUTANTS

Doh! While opinion on the humour of *The Simpsons*' televisual antics may be divided, there can be little doubt about their phenomenal success. Let's face it, Homer, Maggie, Marge, Lisa and Bart must be doing something right if they can topple Bill Cosby from the top of the US TV ratings and get their faces on just about every T-shirt, magazine cover, coffee mug and pair of socks in the Western world.

Sadly, *The Simpsons*' biting humour is just one of the show's many plus points that isn't apparent in this computer interpretation. It comes to us courtesy of Arc Developments, who have ported over Acclaim's popular NES game. The result is not an out-and-out failure, but definitely a case of wasted potential.

Because Bart has proved himself to be by far the most popular and identifiable member of *The Simpsons*, it's he who fronts this arcade-platform romp set in the family's home town of Springfield. The basic premise is that space mutants have landed in the sleepy American suburb, and are planning to build a weapon that will take over the entire planet. Actually, it's not as tenuous as it might sound, as space monsters have popped up in the TV show on a number of occasions - albeit never with a plan as dastardly as this.

Seemingly, Bart is the only person in Springfield who knows what is going on, and so he takes to the streets in an attempt to wake people up to the problem and defeat the mutants before it's too late. Doing so entails making your way through five left-to-right scrolling levels, each a well-known place in Springfield.

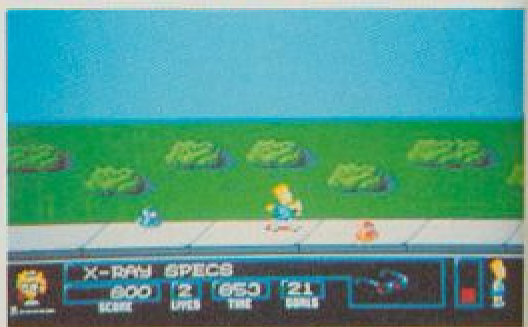
As Bart goes, he must generally get in the mutants' way by picking up or spray-canning objects that the aliens are using to build the super-weapon.

On the first level (streets of Springfield), anything that's pink must be sprayed red - in level two, all hats must be eradicated from the shopping mall, and level three calls for the destruction of all balloons in the Krustyland Amusement Park. And so it goes - there's a basic arcade-orientated puzzle element in the *Rick Dangerous* vein, as not all objects are easily accessible, and Bart must use a combination of lateral thinking and dexterity to reach them.

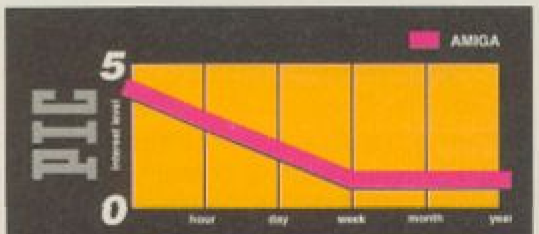
To make things more difficult, there are always plenty of mini-mutants and other troublesome creatures bouncing about that Bart must be careful to avoid. An additional nice touch is that many of the Springfield residents have already been taken over by the mutants' mind-bending ray and can only be seen in their true form when Bart wears his special X-ray sunglasses. By bouncing on a mutants' head, Bart can obtain alien tokens which, if enough are collected, will summon a Simpson family member to help the flat-top brat battle the end-of-level adversaries.

Acclaim, and subsequently Ocean's attempt to create something a bit more sophisticated than the average arcade game is commendable, but the result is nevertheless frustrating because of sloppy game design that makes the whole thing too difficult to play. It's too easy to die through no real fault of your own, and the control is ineffective - to pause the game, you have to access the object menu and select the option from there. Why couldn't we just press 'P'? As far as adapting the TV show is concerned, the music is the most authentic aspect - but then it's not difficult just to copy a tune. Bart is too small and 'flimsy', as are the other characters. *The Simpsons* has a very definite look, and it's not been captured here. *The Simpsons* coin-op gives a much better idea of how the whole thing should have been approached. Hopefully the conversion of that, if it ever appears, will be a more successful venture.

● Gary Whitta



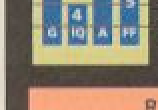
Speed control is vital in this level one skateboarding sub-section. Too fast and you're bound to have an accident - too slow, and you'll not pick up enough speed to clear the obstacles.



Initial interest is bound to be high - it does look very playable at first glance. But desperation and frustration will soon set in, and you'd have to be pretty determined to want to persist. It's always a shame to see a game that was very nearly very good, but instead is just average. And this is one of them. Forget about Bart - in this case it's Ocean who are the underachievers, and it's nothing to be proud of.

ACE RATING

640



AMIGA

Graphically, there's nothing to really impress, apart from the odd pretty background. Because the NES version has been copied so literally, the game has a very 8-bit look to it. Surely Amiga owners could have expected something prettier? The music's fine, but overall it's just not the sort of thing you'd expect to see on an Amiga these days. As Homer would say - Doh!

RELEASE DETAILS

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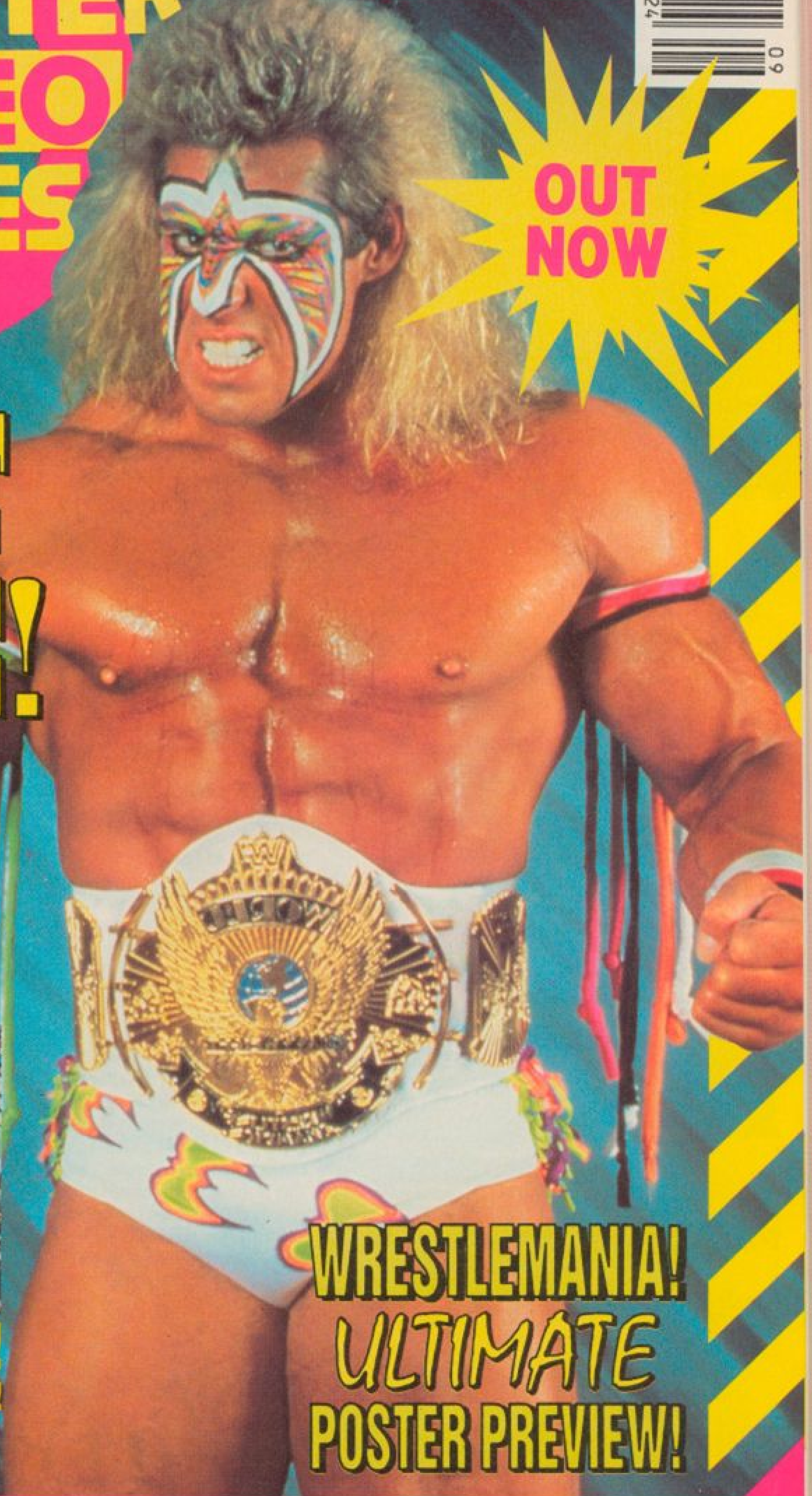

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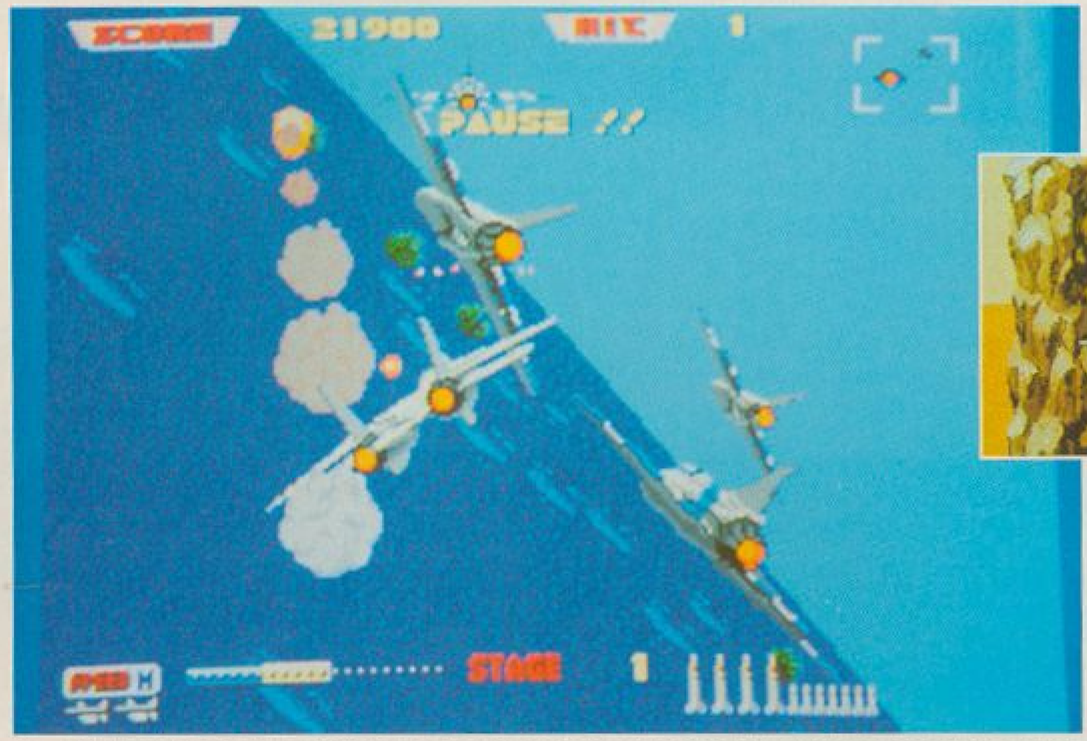
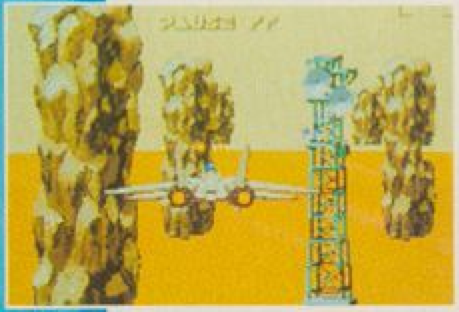
FISTS FULL OF FUN IN BRITAIN'S NUMBER ONE GAMES MAG!

AFTERBURNER 2

SEGA offers you a second chance to earn your wings

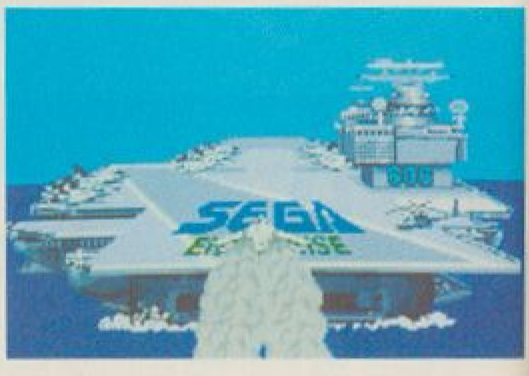


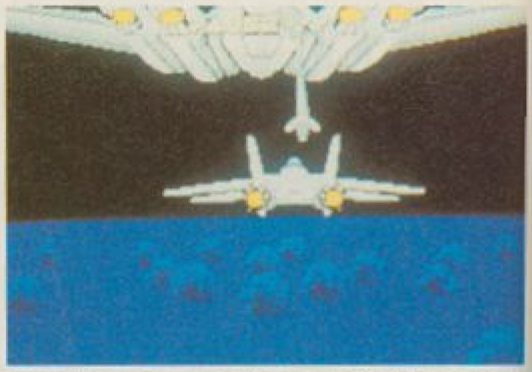
Oh, we do like to kill beside the seaside! Oh, we do like to kill beside the sea! Lock on with those heat-seeking missiles and let rip.



(Left) This part of the mission is a lethal game of slalom through these towering pillars of rock.

(Below) As in the original, each mission segment ends with a return visit to the base aircraft carrier.





You're flying on fumes, so it's just as well that this aerial fuel tanker has appeared. It drops a fuel pipe down to you, and you simply have to line up with it.

Ah, those heady days down at Southend, playing *Afterburner* to an audience of loud mouthed critics who always used to crowd around to poke fun at your game playing. What fun. And now Sega has seen fit to throw the Megadrive conversion our way. Great. Now everyone can do badly at it in their own homes.

General Zorbia has taken it upon himself to invade your peace loving country, the rascal. He is armed with a large army, and is also receiving support from some of his villainous pals, the allied forces. You would be forgiven for thinking that things couldn't get much worse - but you're wrong.

To stop this nasty dictator type, your intelligence forces came across information indicating the whereabouts of two microwave stations, which the enemy is using to control the proposed invasion. If these are destroyed, the enemy will be at your mercy, unable to call for help to their allied chums. Three cheers!

Now, remember that I said things would get worse? Well, now they do. Your government, being the bright sparks they are, have decided to send ONE airplane to accomplish the difficult mission of destroying the microwave stations.

Still, you are flying a super 'Skycat' jet, apparently an F-14XX, a really groovy piece of kit. With it, claim your masters, you should be able to fly through 23 stages of all-out war with umpteen enemy fighters shooting large missiles at you. Oh dear, it doesn't look too good, does it?

For those who haven't a clue as to what *Afterburner II* is all about, here it is: you fly an F-14 into the screen, rather like any racing game you'd care to mention, except there's no cars and no road. You fly over land, sea and cloud through 23 stages,shooting enemy fighters out of the sky with your (limited) missiles. intermittedly you are re- fuelled and re- equipped by a large computer controlled 'plane.

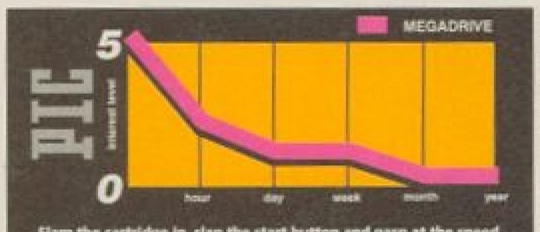
As featured by the arcade machine, you posses eternal 'Vulcan' bullets and two differently sized missiles with which you may lock on to the nasty fighters and (hopefully) shoot them down.

The enemy has a couple of dirty tricks up their sleeves which they produce throughout the game. In the midst of a particularly ferocious fire-fight, for example, an American voice screams "Enemy!" and along comes a fighter, who flies right up your rear. And after that, along comes a missile heading the same way! There's one way to get rid of it though- the good old 360 degree turn. When you inevitably run out of missiles, you are forced to fight off the remaining scum with your bullets. It's a tough life in the air force...

Right, that's got the plot and enemy mannerisms out of the way, what's the game actually like? Well... it's fast - very fast - as fast as the arcade machine in places. Performing a 360 degree roll by banking hard and then banking the other way is an exhilarating experience. And, on the whole, the entire game is very exhilarating due to this speed. And, as such, is a very accurate conversion, containing everything that the coin-op had to offer.

But, after this confirmation that the speed of the game is truly excellent, let me assure you that the gameplay doesn't come out smelling of roses. Don't get me wrong, this is the definitive *Afterburner II* conversion, and as a result carries the dodgy gameplay from the coin-op. The sit down version was a really good play, but rocking back and forth in a chair while playing fails to conjure up similar excitement.

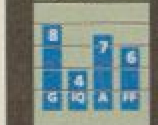
● **David Fitzgerald**



Slam the cartridge in, slap the start button and gasp at the speed. "Cor," I can already hear you say,"I am gunna be playin' on this fer ages!" Not so, I'm afraid. Your fingers will start to hurt and you'll say that you'll come back to it later. But you won't. And you won't for a very long time.

ACE RATING

695



MEGADRIVE

A faithful and very fast conversion of the arcade machine, although it seems incomplete without the releientless swerving about of the sit down cabinet. Fans of the game should start saving now, everyone else can... er... spend theirs recklessly.

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE	£34.99	OUT NOW

THE

ISSUE 36 • SEPTEMBER 1991 DM 12.00 Lire 8,300 £2.50

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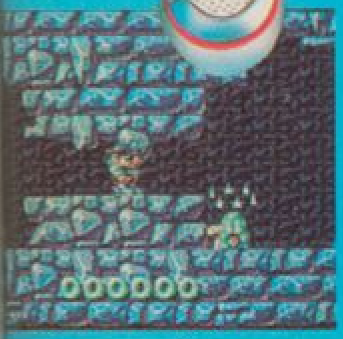
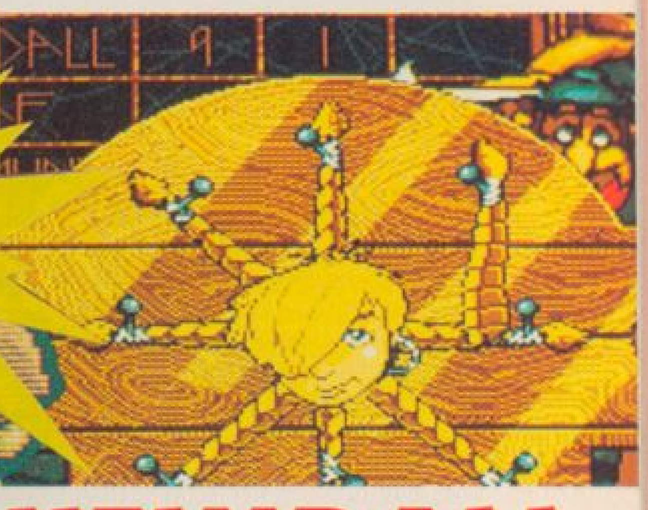


POCKET POWER!

The Bitmaps Delve Deep For A Dose Of Arcade Action



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What the stars would like to see – page 39

WIN! A Trip To The Lucasfilm Ranch In California!

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Gremlin's Utopia Takes On Populous and Sim City

THE ONE SNEAK PREVIEW DISK
2

NO DISK? SEE YOUR NEWSAGENT

On a wing and a prayer with Gremlin's **PEGASUS**

Beast 2 meets the Killing Game Show in Psygnosis' **INFILTRATOR**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **STUNNING** – Eye Of The Storm by Empire
- **THUNDERHAWK** – Core Has Lift-Off
- **ROD-LAND** – So Cute It'll Make You Puke
- **PEDAL TO THE METAL** – With Lotus 2

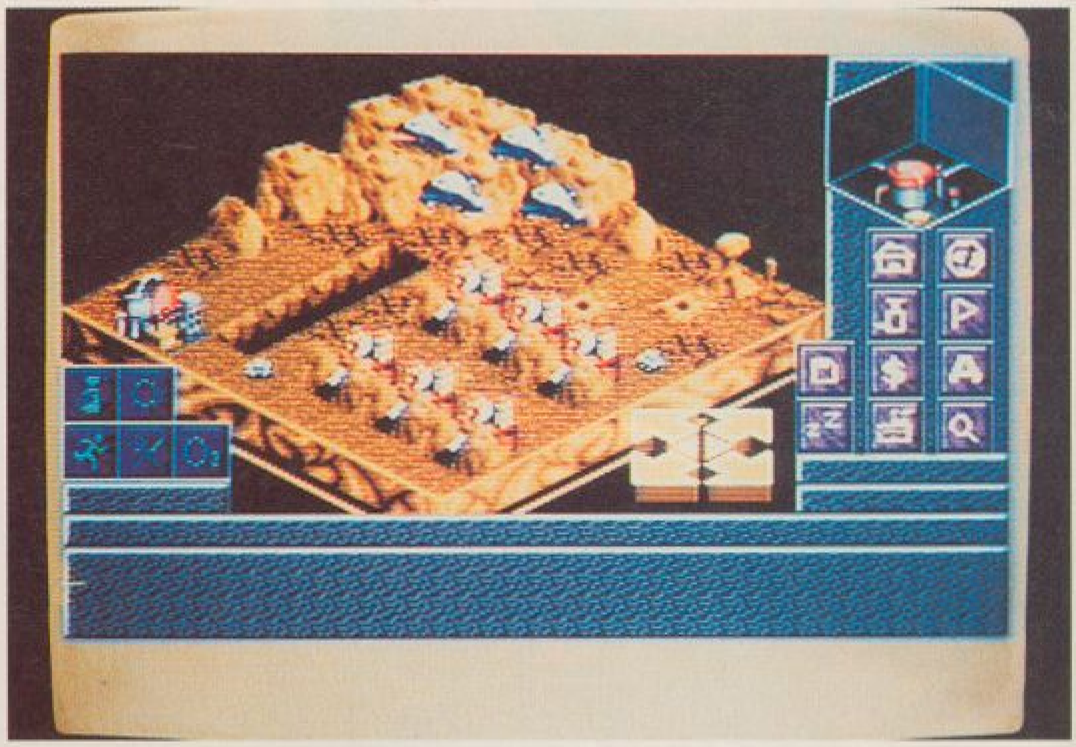
Imagine walking along a secluded Caribbean beach with deep blue skies, clear seas and golden sands. What about a stroll through a field of growing wheat? Or perhaps a fresh swim in a Alpine lake? People's version of Utopia, the perfect place to live, differs of course. Graham Ing and Robert Crack, the creators of *BSS Jane Seymour*, would like us to believe a DIY space colony is the only way to create perfection. At least that's the task ahead of you in this hybrid game from Gremlin.

Utopia is stir-fry software. Take the urban construction and administration elements of *SimCity*, place them over a hot *Populous*-style isometric 3D view of the landscape, and throw in a pinch of warmongering space invaders for added flavour. That's seems to be the recipe for *Utopia*. Does the combination turn sweet or sour?

It's not difficult to grasp the aims and controls of the game. Your task as colony commander is to create a Utopian society on some far away planet. Spend all your money on hospitals, food production and month-long sports festivals and your populace will be content, but without any credible defence the inevitable computer-controlled alien attack will wipe you out before you've had chance to construct your first missile launcher.

Controlling the social, economic and military development of the colony is a balancing act on a grand scale. There is no finite aim or end to *Utopia*, although you're supposed to try for a 'Quality of Life' rating of 80% or above.

You start the game at a considerably lower level with a few key buildings already in place. From there on in, it's up to you. Most of your time is spent hovering over a magnified isometric 3D view of the planet surface. A selection of command symbols situated along the right hand-side of the screen allow you to generally play around with the administrative affairs, see the whole of the world and search for ore deposits, choose a particular type of building to construct, fiddle the finances, and so forth.

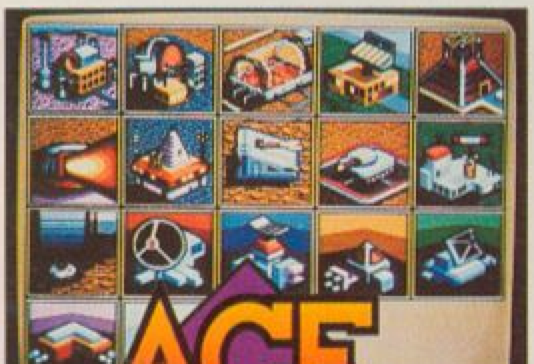


This game is full of little touches which aid your split-second decision making. For instance, you can tell which buildings are still under construction because they're surrounded by scaffolding. Simple yet effective.

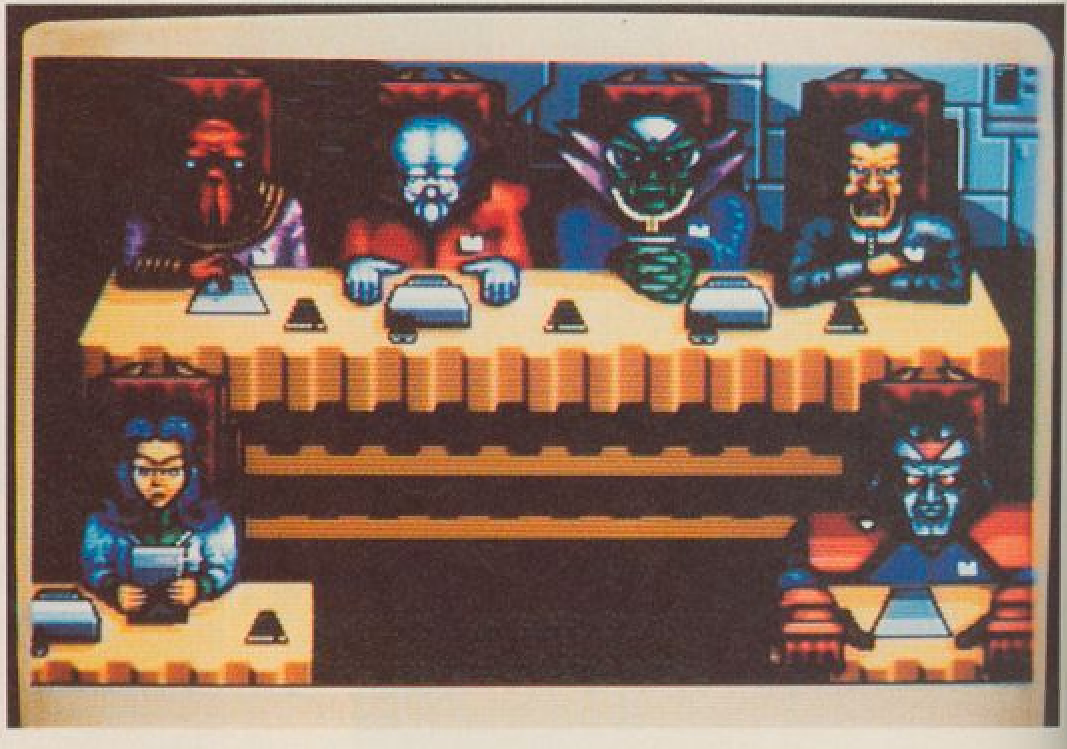
Each construction has a function crucial to the colony. A hospital, for example, can be used to increase the number of colonists by improving their birth rate and health. In addition, you should increase your medical budget when you build one, otherwise you'll get the equivalent of a nurses strike. Talking of strikes, you must remember to prepare for an alien invasion. This can come at any time, but you can take sensible precautions by building a fairly large army and adequate defence network. Programmer Graham Ing recommends you build a small expeditionary force, wait for the aliens to wipe these suckers

UTOPIA

Is GREMLIN'S latest a vision of perfection?

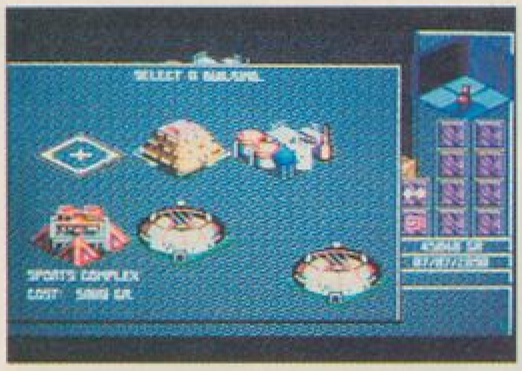


ACE TrailBlazer



(Right) From this screen the player can choose from the range of buildings on offer and decide which one he wants to plonk down on the attractive brown 'n' purple landscape.

(Right below) One of the attractive intro screens, showing your Command HQ in all its ominous glory.



out, find out the weaknesses of your opponents in the process, then build a big kick-ass army and save the day. But what does he know, anyway?

If things are going badly, flashing indicators light-up to warn of insufficient air, food and power supplies. Ignore these warnings and you could end up facing terrorist attacks or even assassination attempts! A team of experts can provide advice if it all seems too much.

You're able to move onto any of the other nine planet scenarios once you get bored looking at the brown mountain ranges with purple patches of space moss in the first one. Were the designers of the game colour blind or what? Each interstellar landscape has unique terrain features and a different race of alien to contend with. Some of these horrible hitmen stroll down your streets in *Star Wars*-style Walker robots going "Kill! Kill! Kill".

Have you got what it takes to build a Utopian society or are you a fascist military dictator in disguise? There's only one fun way to find out...

● **Tony Montana**

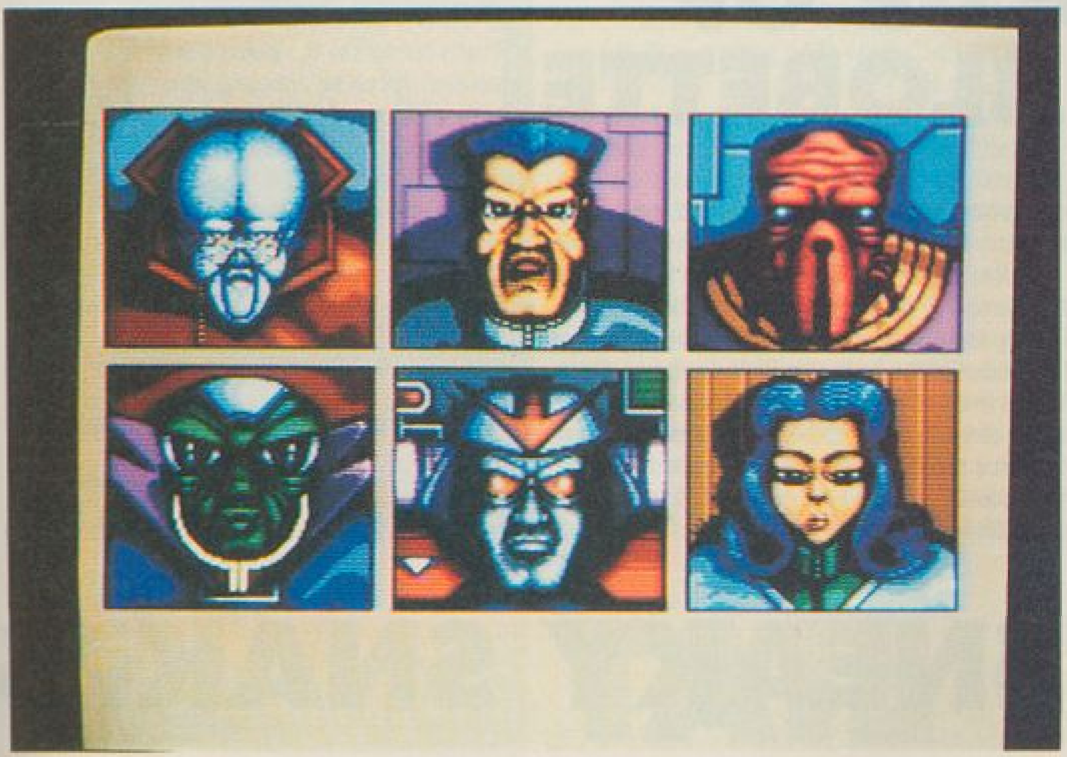
MASTER AND SERVANT

So you want to become a military dictator, eh? Here are a few ACE tips on how to achieve your anti-social ambitions.

First, find a large ore deposit and build a couple of mines. Now get to work building a hospital, arms lab and the first few tank and ship construction yards. Next, increase income tax to max hardship, get rid of useless goods like gems, and bump up your military, research and security grants. If you ask us, putting money into spying is throwing good money after bad. All you need to know is that the enemy is coming sooner or later.

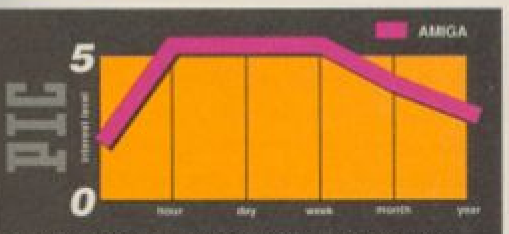
Like *Powermonger*, your herd of sheep, sorry, colonists will eventually invent something useful like a fusion cruiser spaceship or tank transporter. Keep the birth-rate high and make sure you have enough living quarters and storage facilities. The tank and plane factories need to be constantly feed with people and supplies. Nothing should deter you from the final objective: total alien annihilation.

Once the colonists realise you don't give a toss about them you'd better throw in a Security HQ and recruit more security personnel. After all, you don't want to be bumped off before the big show, do you? Go for a thin defence line of missile launchers and laser turrets around the outskirts of the colony. Don't forget you'll need plenty of radar coverage to warn of imminent alien attacks and a secondary standby Command Centre could prove useful during the heat of battle. Good luck, Commander.



(Left) These are the alien leaders you have to face-off against - and what an ungly bunch they are too!

(Below) And here's a sports stadium in-situ, and rapidly approaching completion. It's all very well keeping your populace happy with leisure centres, but if you don't set up some anti-alien defences then you're laying yourself open to alien attack.



Seems a little daunting at first. You'll need about 20 minutes to get used to everything and will probably spend a further hour or two just experimenting. Then hardcore gaming can begin. There's no 'right way' to complete the game so you should be hooked for quite some time. In case you do get bored, Gremlin is already preparing a datadisk with more planets to colonise and aliens to conquer.

ACE RATING
920

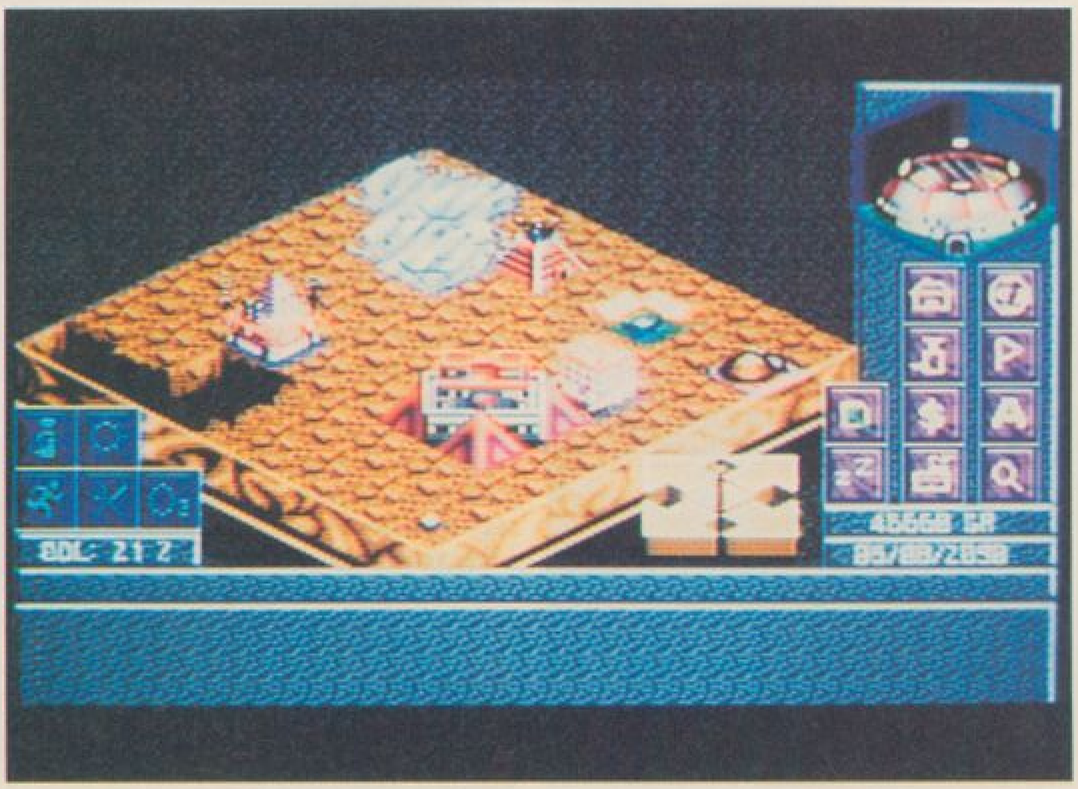
G	IQ	A	FF
9	8	6	7

AMIGA

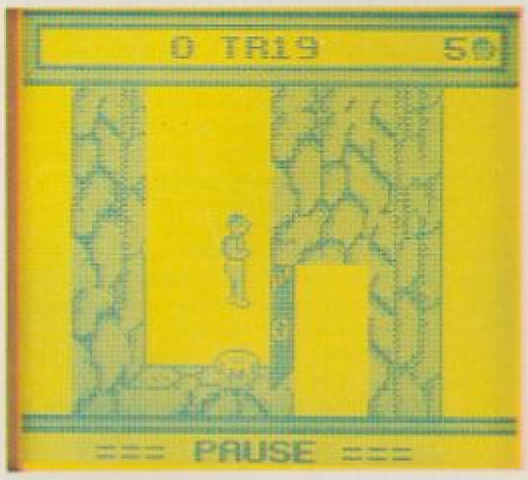
Originally this was to have been a game with 2D map display just like SimCity. Luckily, Bemi at Gremlin had other ideas and created some gorgeous 32-colour scenery graphics for players to discover. Building up a fleet of little 'Joe 90' tanks and planes looks very satisfying, too. An interactive audio track reflects the success, or failure, of your current administrative decisions.

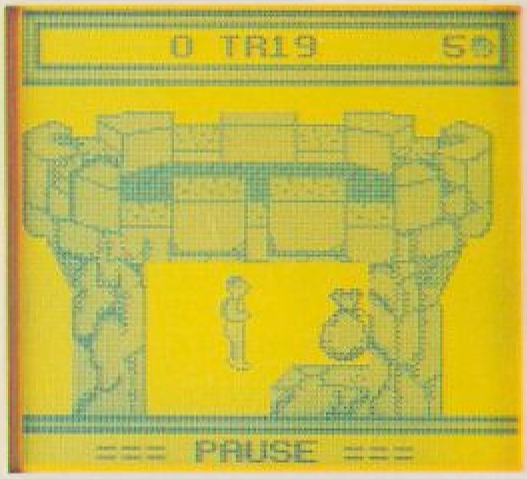
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£29.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£29.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£TBA	TBA



More top imported games for NINTENDO's handheld, including the Gameboy incarnation of David Crane's NES hit *A Boy and his Blob*





THE RESCUE OF PRINCESS BLOBETTE

Fresh from their knock-out success on the NES, David Crane (he of *Pitfall*, *Little Computer People* and *Ghostbusters* fame) brings the Boy and his Blob to the small screen in an all-new adventure.

On the planet Blobolonia all is not well. The Princess Blobette has been kidnapped by the vile Antagonistic Alchemist and locked away, high up in a tower in the Royal Castle of Blobolonia. It's up to you, as the Kid, to rescue her. Fortunately you are not alone. The Blob, a cute bouncing ball of rubber, is always with you and ever keen to help.

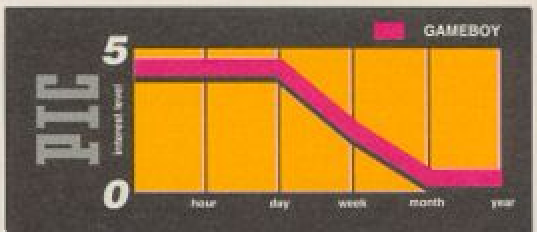
But the Blob is far more than just a faithful companion. If the Kid feeds it a jelly bean, the Blob is capable of shape changing. Depending on the flavour of the bean, the Blob can be anything from a trampoline to a rocket. Thus, armed with a bag of multi-flavoured beans the intrepid twosome enter the perilous Castle and begin their quest...

The Blob is one of those rare things in computer games - a truly original gaming concept. Play consists of exploring the Castle and using the Blob's shape-shifting shenanigans to solve a variety of problems. It's completely unique, and while not everyone's bag o' jelly beans, most should find it pretty good fun.

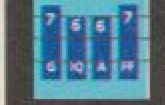
That's not to say the game doesn't have problems. It can be annoying when you get into a situation where you think you can't progress (some sort of cryptic help facility would've been nice), but a bit of lateral thinking should see you right.

However, the biggest fault is the incredibly small game map. Once you get a handle on how the problems work you'll probably find the game's over practically before it's begun. Come on, David, I know small is beautiful, but this is ridiculous! Ah well, never mind. For it's novelty value alone, The Rescue Of The Princess Blobette is a worthy addition to your Gameboy collection.

● **David Upchurch**



ACE RATING
740



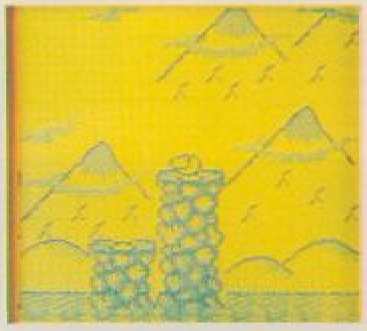
GAMEBOY

The graphics and sound are more functional than attractive, though the Blob's shape-shifting contortions are undeniably cute. The unique gameplay is brilliant, but it can be frustrating when you can't work out what you've got to do next. Lovely while it lasts - which, unfortunately, won't be that long.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY £24.99 OUT NOW

SNEAKY SNAKES



The floor's so clean you can eat your dinner off it - literally. That round object underneath Genghis is a dinner plate. Jumping up and down on it flips it over to reveal food or some sort of power-up goody.

Genghis and Atilla are sneaky snakes. And they're steaming too, 'cos the Nasty Nibbler has kidnapped their favourite female snake Sonia. The snakes must slither their way through sixteen action packed levels before attempting to rescue Sonia from a death worse than fate, or something.

Enough of the high concept and on with the action, thank you very much. The goal of each level is for the particular snake you are controlling to become heavy enough to successfully "ding" a fairground bell, thus opening a big door through to the next stage. The weight of each snake is governed by the number of segments comprising it. Eating a nourishing object found on the level will add an extra segment to the snake's tail.

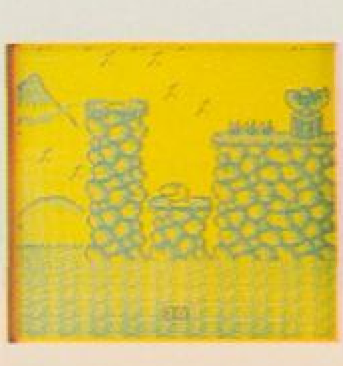
The problems begin when you've got an extremely big snake and it becomes difficult to move around without damaging it on the scenery (oo-er). Hostile items are out to get you all the time, and the very source of food - little manhole covers in the ground and plants which spit out balloons - can just as easily produce snake-squashing bombs.

So for the first couple of levels we have a rather straightforward exploration and eating affair, made exciting only by the time-limit. Later on, life becomes marginally more exciting as bombs appear with greater regularity and the landscapes require some real exploration if enough food is to be found to meet the weight requirement for the completion of the stage.

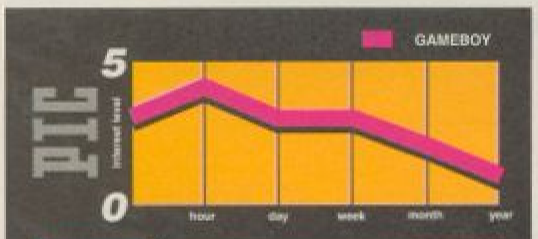
Added interest is provided by the multiple Warp stages where bonuses can be had for players brave enough to spend valuable time looking.

By far the best thing about *Sneaky Snakes* is the super smooth control over the snake itself, which is a whole lot more satisfying than the rest of the game. Shame.

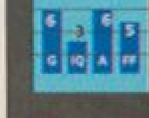
● **David Upchurch**



That strange-looking plant thingy to the right of the screen is both your friend and foe. It spits out little balls which turn into either food or bombs. Suffice to say, bombs should NOT be gulped down!



ACE RATING
650



GAMEBOY

Hardly the best Gameboy title available, although *Sneaky Snakes* has plenty of neat touches. It hasn't really got the puzzle-angle or the frenetic action of many othe titles to appeal to a particular group of players, and works better as a novelty title. Control over the character of the snake is simply excellent, and there's some fun to be had there, and it's simply a shame that the rest of the game doesn't match up.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY £24.99 OUT NOW

CASTLEVANIA 2 BELMONT'S REVENGE

Although yet another in the long line of 'Mighty Warrior On Mighty Quest' games, this has the proud distinction of being not at all bad, unlike 99.99% of the others in the genre.

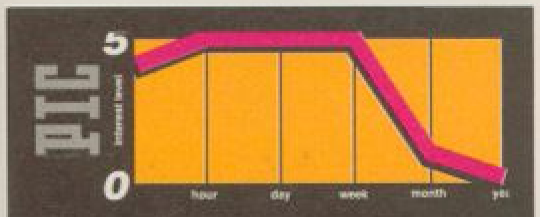
In the original *Castlevania*, the proud, bare-chested warrior Christopher Belmont (doesn't he sound beefy?) finally put an end to Dracula's blood-sucking reign of terror (A.K.A. The Night of the Long Teeth). The relieved burghers of Castlevania hoped that this would be the last they would ever see of the undead fiend. But no. Fifteen years later and he's back, his black influence emanating from four mighty fortresses. In Christopher's absence, it's up to his son Soleiyu (obviously the family's penchant for sensible if soft names stopped with Chris) to enter the castles and slay the evil guardians in each.

Gameplay, to be honest, holds few surprises. It's basically an enhanced *Rygar*, with Soleiyu marching though screen after scrolling screen of moving platforms and ledges, bashing meanies out of the way with his yoyo-like weapon. Sure enough, there are special casks which, once cracked open, reveal a variety of power-ups.

At first, it all seems depressingly run-of-the-mill. Oh, fun and very playable all right, but still run-of-the-mill. But then some very nice features appear, like crushing walls where the player has to time his run from entrance to exit so as to avoid getting mashed, or massive spikes shooting out of the walls which not only have to avoided but also used as platforms to climb up to new areas of the level, or whirring conveyors which will either dash you on spikes or mangle you in their belt drives if you aren't spritely.

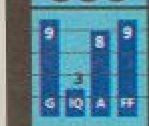
In short, *Castlevania 2* mixes quality gameplay with a host of surprises and a never-ending stream of challenges that lift the game well out of the mire of the also-rans and into 'must buy' territory. Action games this good are rare enough, but on the Gameboy they're practically non-existent. Driver, to the software shop...

● **David Upchurch**



ACE RATING

880

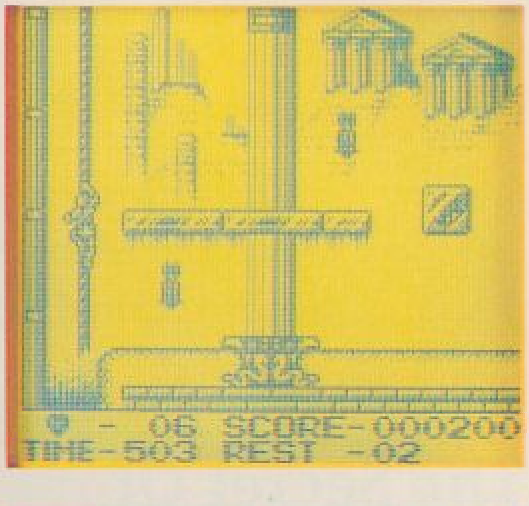


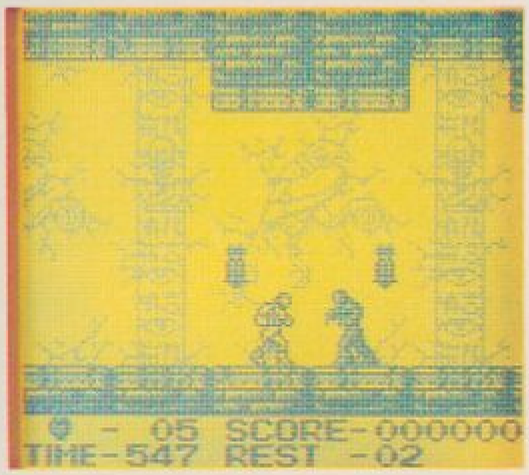
GAMEBOY

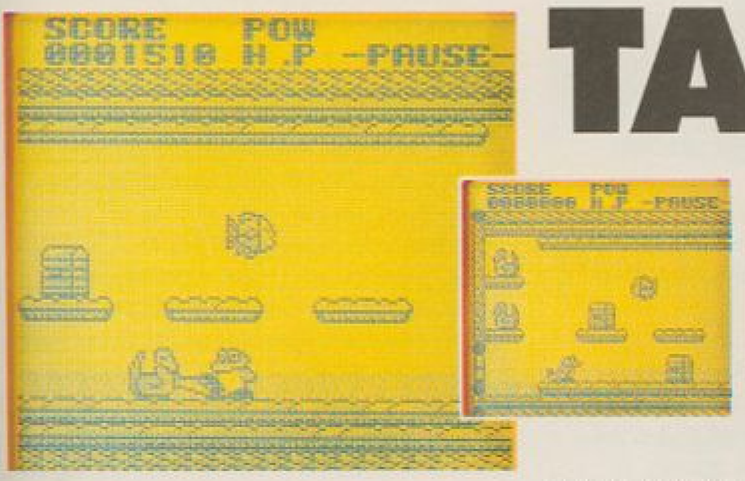
Konami, with the likes of *Turtles* and *Operation C* under its belt, knows how to turn out a good-looking game, and uses its gen to good effect here. The detailed backgrounds scroll fast enough to make the game playable but not so fast as to make it unwatchable, and the sprites are superb. But although toughish, *Castlevania 2* probably won't takes you more than a couple of weeks to crack.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY £24.99 OUT NOW







TAIL GATOR

The peaceful kingdom of Moberry is under attack! A powerful dragon has teleported his castle and armies into an animal reals that never knew warfare. The creatures went to their greatest hero to save them... Charly, the highland alligator. Help Charly strike a blow for freedom in this tail-spinning adventure for the Game Boy!

Oh, my mistake. And there I was thinking this was just a sad little *Manic Miner* rip off with a stupid central character which would be serving the populace far better as a handbag and a pair of shiny shoes.

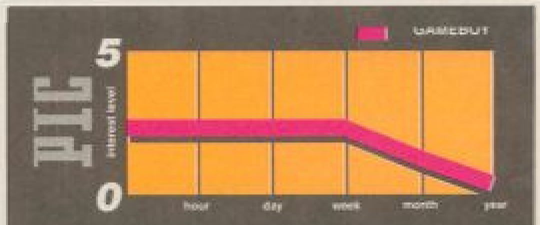
Presented in side-on fashion with graphics just on the right side of acceptability, *Tail-Gator* offers the player some low-concept icon collection and some hilariously rubbishy combat.

Pestered in his quest to reach the end of the level by an assorted bunch of remarkably unmenacing creatures, Charly must flick his tail and send the bad guys spinning off the screen. Or when he gets really cross, he can activate an occasionally-found smart-bomb, clearing the current stage of all enemies for a brief period.

Chests which litter each screen contain either power-ups, bombs or keys which will open the doors to new levels. Some levels contain crumbly floors through which Charly sinks or waterfalls up which Charly rises. But so far as I could see, there are very few levels with things in which would have the slightest entertainment value for Charly or anyone else for that matter.

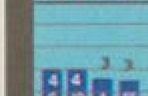
We've really moved on from games where the entire objective is to get off the current screen by collecting a key, or at least everyone except Natsume have. For the merest instant of a second of a moment, *Tail-Gator* looks as if it could be one of those simple-yet-addictive games which looks rubbish but plays like a dream. But it isn't. So don't be fooled.

● **Jim Douglas**



ACE RATING

370



GAMEBOY

Low quality and not many laughs either. Perhaps *Tail-Gator* would offer some entertainment for very very very new Gameboy-fans who haven't much gaming experience, or those who simply find a lot of levels satisfying enough. Older, wiser or otherwise more grown up or clever owners would be wise to steer clear.

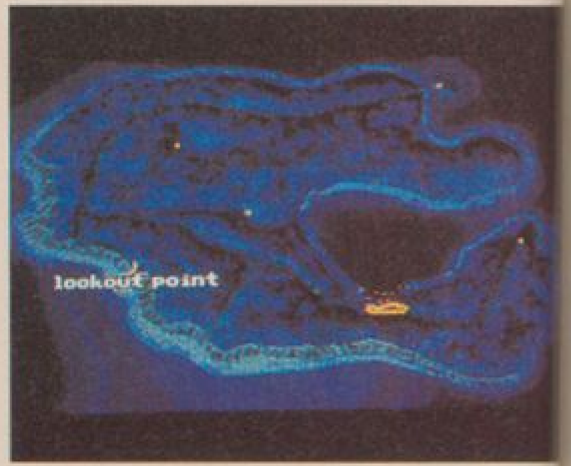
RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY £24.99 OUT NOW

TNT Tricks 'n' Tactics

Walk to
Walk to
Pick up
Talk to
Give
Use
Look at
Turn on
Turn off
minutes
fish
hunk of meat
map
sword
shovel

The final secrets of Monkey Island are revealed, and there's a goodly sprinkling of short 'n' sweet tips. Lap it up, punters!



The Secret Of Monkey Island

Put on your eyepatch and shiver your timbers, as we set sail for Monkey Island a second and final time, courtesy of John Bolt's playing guide. By the looks of it, things don't start well...

DISASTER!

Listen to the Look-Out's take of woe, then head over to Stan's in the hope of finding a boat. Try to buy a couple of boats with your meagre fortune, then return to the store in the hope of gaining a note of credit. When the storekeeper takes the note from the safe, make a note of the combination used, as he is unlikely to be satisfied enough with your 'profession' to give you any credit. If he does not, then send him to speak with the Sword Master for you. While the storekeeper's away, open the safe and remove the note he's left.

Return to Stan's, and try to buy the cheapest boat you can get. Haggle over the price for a while, then pretend to leave, agreeing to come back when he asks. Offer or repeat your offer of five thousand pieces of eight, and he should hopefully accept. However, you still have to find a crew.

The first and easiest member to enrol to your cause is the Sword Master. Simply go to her house and tell her of the Governor's kidnap - she joins without delay. Next, travel to the shore to the North-East, and use the rubber chicken to get to the house. Speak with Meathook, and try not to insult him (in other words, don't call him 'cannonball head' too often). When he claims that you are not captain material and presents you with the fearsome beast that maimed him, try stroking it. He will be overawed by your courage and readily agree to join your crew.

Finally, you need to free Otis to gain your third crew member. To do so, collect some mugs from the Scumm Inn, and full one with grog from the barrel in the kitchen. As the grog begins to melt through the mug, decant it into another, repeating the process until you reach the jail. Then pour the grog onto the lock, and Otis is freed. Don't be put off by his initial reaction - he'll be back. Now, simply head back to the dock area, and you will be ready to leave for Monkey Island.

PART 2: THE JOURNEY

To start with, collect the ink and feather pen from your desk, before opening the left-hand drawer and remove the book - be sure to read it now. Next, collect the Jolly Roger from the lookout post, then go down into the hold. Collect the rope, some gunpowder from the kegs, and the fine wine from the chest in the bottom right-hand corner. Now proceed to the kitchen and get the pot and some cereal from the cupboard. Light the book in the fire. Open the cereal box, and examine the prize revealed. Unlock the cabinet in your room with the key and pick up the chest. Return to the kitchen with your new possessions from the chest and begin to prepare the recipe.

FINDING SUBSTITUTES FOR THE INGREDIENTS

1 Cinnamon Stick	Believe it or not, a cinnamon stick will suffice.
4 Leaves of Mint	Substitute breath mints.
1 Human Skull	The Jolly Roger will do.
1 Squirt Squid Ink	Normal ink has the same effect.
3 pts Monkey Blood	Wine's red, it's close enough.
1 Live Chicken	Another use for the rubber chicken.
3 oz Brimstone	There's enough sulphur in gunpowder to work here.
Various additives	All found in your every day cereal.

Once the final ingredient has been added, the spell takes effect. When you wake up later, first grab another handful of gunpowder, then go to the deck. To get onto Monkey Island, simply use a piece of rope as a fuse for the cannon, stick some gunpowder in the nozzle, then wear the pot and get in. You will be blown to...

PART 3: UNDER MONKEY ISLAND

Once you regain your senses, grab the banana from beneath the nearby tree. Go to the clearing and give the monkey your offering. Next travel to the river fork and climb the handholds. By studying the primitive work of art and the pile of rocks above you should be able to accurately hit the banana tree on the recently visited beach. Once you have done so, return and pick up the new bananas, stopping off once more to give them to the ravenous monkey.

Travel west to reach Toothrot's Fort. Pick up the spyglass and rope, then push the cannon. After you have got rid of Herman again, pick up the cannonball and gunpowder, and return to the river fork. Once there, use the gunpowder with the dam, and either use the flint (found on the memo in this location) with the cannonball, or open the spyglass and use the lens with the sun to detonate the charge.travel to the pond formed and collect the rope from the ill gentleman. Go to the crack and use a rope firstly on the strong branch, then on the sturdy stump on the next level down. Climb down to the bottom and collect the oars. Return to the beach, use the oars with the boat and set sail.

Sail North and leave your boat on the beach at the uppermost part of the island. Walk to the cannibals' village. Once there, walk to the left and collect the bananas from the bowl of fruit, then walk right to be apprehended by the cannibals. Once locked in the hut, collect the skull (if you're into that) and then search the floor for the loose floorboard. Lift it and leave via the hole (don't try and take the banana picker yet, as it can only be removed via the door).

Laden with bananas, return to the monkey and give him all of them. He should now follow you around the main map. Go to the clearing with the giant monkey head, and examine the right-facing nose on the totem pole behind you, just beside the fence. Pull it, and the fence will open. The monkey will now helpfully swing on the nose and hold the gate open while you enter.

Once inside the sacred area, pick up the small idol and return to the cannibals. Persuade them to let you offer them a gift in exchange for your life, and then give them the idol. Once they leave, enter the hut you had previously been locked in and remove the banana picker. Give this to Herman, who will give you the monkey head key in return.

Go back to the clearing, and open the head by using the key in the head's ear. Explore the catacombs for a while, and if you are unable to find your way through (very likely), return to the cannibals. When asked about a favour, try and get them to help you through the catacombs, then try and persuade them to give your their navigator's head. When they refuse, offer them your leaflet on "How To Get Ahead In Navigating" and, thanks to their abysmal literary skills, they will gladly give you their head. Return to the catacombs and use the head to guide you to the ship.

Once you have arrived at the ship, talk with the head to persuade it to give you it's necklace of invisibility against ghosts. It may be slightly unwilling to part with it's possession, but threatening to dropkick it into the lava often brings results. Wear the necklace and board the ship.

Once on the ship, travel first to the hatch, and collect the ghost feather from nearby on of the ghost chickens, and use it on the sleeping ghosts feet to collect his ghost grog. Return to the deck, and walk left to enter LeChucks room. Walk as close to the key on the wall as you are able, then use your magnetic compass to attract it.

Go back below deck to the room with the phantom livestock, then unlock the hatch and descend. Use the grog in the rat's dish to put it out of action, then collect some grease and return to the squeaky door above. Use grease on the floor, then open it and go through to collect the ghost tools. Return once more to the animals, and use the tools on the glowing crate to open it and retrieve the voodoo antiroot, necessary for the cannibals' plans. Then leave the ship.

Once you return, talk to the ghost, and find out where the ship has gone. Once Toothrot arrives, and they both start to leave, stop them and force them to take you with them.

PART 4: GUYBRUSH KICKS BUTT

When you arrive back at Melee Island, let any ghosts you meet gave a taste of voodoo root beer, and hurry to the church. Stop the wedding taking place, and advance at the evil captain.

After you have been soundly walloped across the island to Stan's, wait until Stan gets his from LeChuck, and once you have been extracted from the grog machine, grab the Root Beer and let LeChuck have it. Watch the end sequence, and wait through the boring credits as there is a fairly good piece of advice right at the end.

Supercars 2

Fancy a big surprise? Oh, I bet you do. Colin McGinley from Paris in sunny France says if you type in 'I WALK THE HILL' where Player 1's name goes and 'INWARDS' where Player 2's name goes for a surprise effect.

Horror Zombies From The Crypt

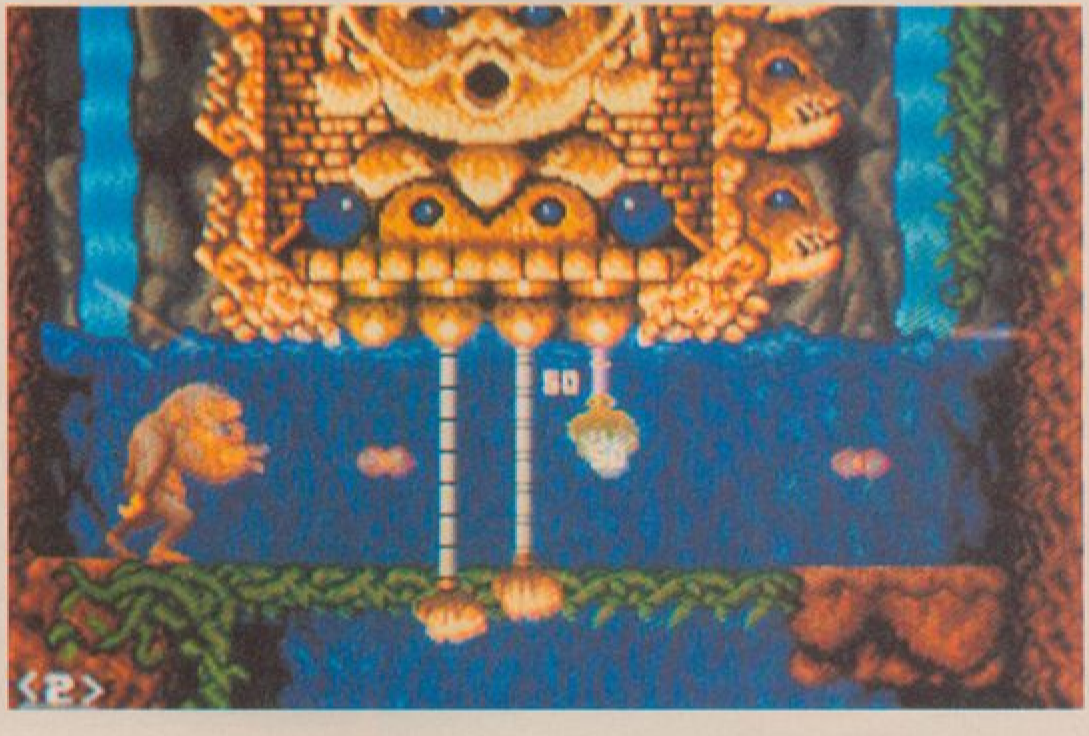
More sterling work by Colin McGinley. If you're partial to infinite lives, type in 'IMMORTAL' as the password. If this doesn't work, try 'BOGEY EATER' or 'CUSTODES'.

Pang

Around the World in a day, thanks again to Colin McGinley. On the map screen type 'WHAT A NICE CHEAT' to be able to select any location you want.

Toki

Stop, Colin, stop! It's a tip overload. Fancy being able to select a level? Simply press 'R' while playing. The screen should become inverse. Now press F1 to F8 to chose a level, and press 'N' to reverse the screen back to normal.

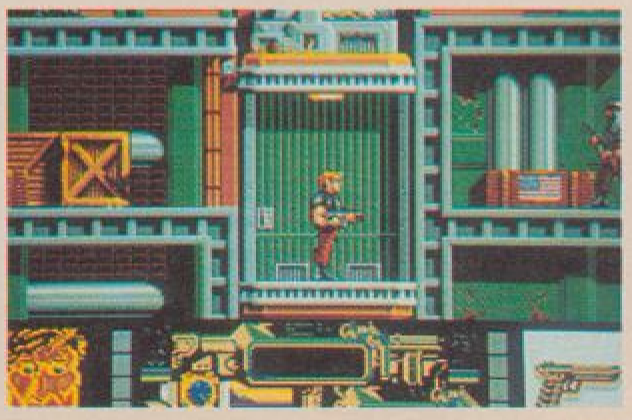


Predator 2

This is the one without 'big' Arnie in it. For a never-ending supply of ammo and the ability to kill the innocents without penality, PAUSE the game and type (with spaces) 'YOU'RE ONE UGLY MUTHA'.

Stormball

If you type 'LET ME WIN' during play you will, er, win. What imaginative types these programmers are! Thanks again to Colin McGinley.



Navy Seals

Decent game, blummin' awful film. If you feel the need for infinite credits, just type in 'PSBOYS' on the Hi-Score table.

☞

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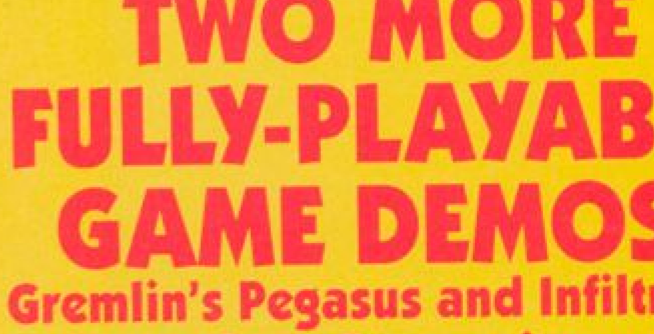
THE One for ST GAMES

POCKET POWER!

Can The Bitmaps Really Play The Cutie Game? Page 58

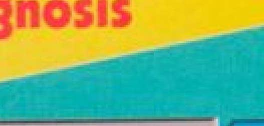
TWO MORE FULLY-PLAYABLE GAME DEMOS!

Gremlin's Pegasus and Infiltrator from Psygnosis

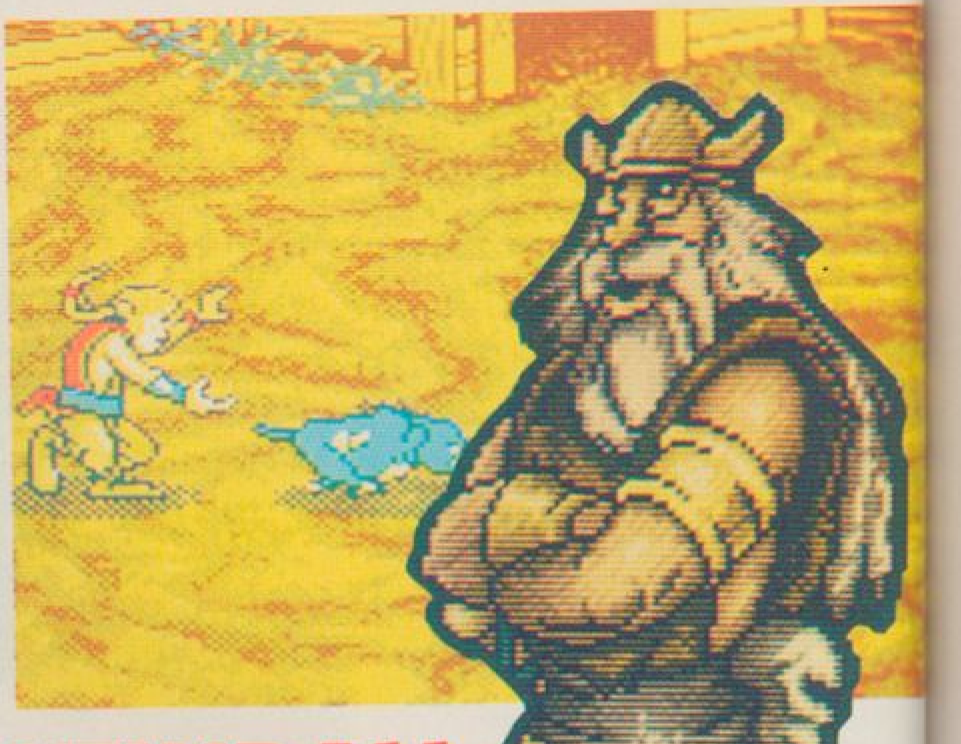

THE ONE SNEAK PREVIEW DISK
2

NO DISK? SEE YOUR NEWSAGENT

A walk in the woods with Psygnosis' **OBITUS**



Pulsating pecs and pixel-perfect parallax in Empire's **DEATHBRINGER**

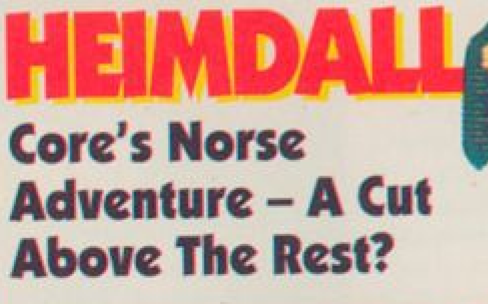


HEIMDALL

Core's Norse Adventure – A Cut Above The Rest?

OUT NOW

WHAT WOULD MAKE THE ULTIMATE GAMES MACHINE? Hear what the stars would like to see – turn to page 39



BRAVE NEW WORLD

Gremlin's Utopia Takes On Populous and Sim City

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- **STUNNING** – Eye Of The Storm by Empire
- **THUNDERHAWK** – Core Has Lift-Off
- **ROD-LAND** – So Cute It'll Make You Puke
- **PEDAL TO THE METAL** – With Lotus 2

WIN! A Trip To The Lucasfilm Ranch In California!

ER
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09

Spirit Of Excalibur

Stijn Sterckx from Belgium has written in with a fab tip he 'discovered' on the PC version of this Arthurian quest. With it, Stijn reckons you will be able to change the statistics of your players. It's all entered from DOS and be careful with the ol' typing or you may get very cross...

```
debug name. sav<enter>
e code <enter>
OA OA 32 64 14 14 <enter>
w<enter>
q<enter>
```

('name' is the name of your saved game, and 'code' is the number corresponding to the name that you want to change, as listed below.)

165	Constantine
19d	Bedivere
1d5	Ector
20d	Dinas
245	Nerovens
27d	Bellengerus
2b5	Bors
2ed	Balamoure
325	Bleobris
35d	Lavain
395	Galihodin
3cd	Melias
405	Palomidas
43d	Hebes
475	Lionel
4ad	Lancelot
4e5	Baudwin
51d	Nineve
555	Dubric
58d	Gahalantine
5C5	Villars
5fd	Sadok
635	Selises
66d	Clariance
6a5	Peredur
6dd	King Owain
715	Baldric

Logical

Jacob Gemzoe, who hails from Denmark, has written in with all the (one hundred) level passwords of this marble-channelling puzzle game, and me being the most junior in the office, I've been lumbered with typing them all out. Bah!

1	WELCOME
2	THE OTHER SIDE
3	QUADRI QUADRA
4	STONE ROAD
5	NICE COLORS
6	MORE COLORS
7	REAL FUN
8	PINK AND PINK
9	GREEN PATH
10	BAD DIRECTION
11	DON'T PANIC
12	COLORMANIA
13	REFRESHMENT
14	FULL MOON
15	RUNNING BALLS
16	GREEN RIVER
17	TWO ISLANDS
18	MORE ISLANDS
19	TIMES CHANGES
20	OTHER THINGS
21	BE HONEST
22	BLUE N VIOLET
23	THREE PATHS
24	DANGEROUS
25	THE WANDERER
26	SECRET CHAMBER
27	FALCONS FLIGHT
28	BLUE ANGEL
29	FAR THUNDER
30	A SIMPLE ONE
31	BLUE VELVET
32	PARADISE I
33	CLASSIC ART
34	VENI VIDI VICI
35	WE LIKE IT
36	FOREVER HERE
37	WONDERLAND
38	THE SNARE
39	CURE IT
40	SUN IS SHINING
41	A RAINBOW
42	ARROW ROAD
43	TURNING WHEELS
44	ACCELERATION
45	THE PRESIDENT
46	HE IS MISSING
47	PICKNICK TIME
48	WHO IS CALLING
49	ANCIENT ART
50	SHE IS GONE
51	LOGISTIC
52	TURNING COLORS
53	PARAMOUNT
54	THE LADDER
55	BACK IN RED
56	TREASURE ROOM
57	DONT' WANT THAT
58	FREE FALL
59	CORRADO BEACH
60	MORE POP CORN
61	WILD AT HEART
62	THE DARK AGE
63	DIMLIGHTS
64	THE FIFTIES
65	PICTURE OF HER
66	GORDIAN KNOT
67	HIGH SPEED
68	ALEXANDRIA
69	RUNNING TEARS
70	HER RAINBOW
71	WALK IN CREAM
72	TOUCH HER
73	SHADOWLAND
74	JACK IN BAG
75	VITAMIN C
76	STUNT BALL
77	MIRRORLAND
78	ACE QUEST
79	BOA BOA BOA
80	DA DA DA
81	HAUNTED HOUSE
82	THE SECRETS
83	SMILING JOKE
84	CHILDREN GO
85	IT IS ATLANTIS
86	ON THE ROAD
87	BLUE IS FIRST
88	WOLFS MOON
89	WILD CHINA
90	ITS LOGICAL
91	SHE COMPARES
92	BIG MOUNTAINS
93	TOMORROW
94	TELEPORTER JAM
95	LEVER SUNLIGHT
96	NEW EXODUS
97	THE PEACEPIPE
98	FINAL SURPRISE
99	WHITE MIAMI
100	THE FINAL CUT

Console Corner

GAMEBOY

Operation C

Three hearty cheers for Adam Thain of Bucks for these helpful hints for *Operation C*. He writes to tell us that to finish the levels you'll need the homing gun.

When you reach Level 4, make your way past the fourth bridge until you spy a mound on the left - shoot it and it will supply you with a homing wing.

On Level 5, on the top left of the first flight of stairs there's a scorpion in a cylinder. Waste the little mite and again you will be supplied with a homing wing.

Wizards & Warriors

Adam also has some helpful tips for this cracking arcade adventure. But we're not going to print them! Har, har, haaar!! Oh, aaaalright.

Level 2.0: Jump onto the ledge at the end of the level before the gate to collect the gems.

Level 2.1: Do the same as above to save using one of your keys on the gate.

Level 2.4:e Enter the skull by simply waiting for the jaw to drop twice slowly and then jumping in.

Level 3.0: Turn left and wait for the lift to collect an extra life and a key. When past the spitting dragon, go through the door in the wall to complete the level.

Level 3.1: Collect the key, open the chest, grab the jumping boots and go through the door in the wall after the surreal-sounding Fountain of Balls.

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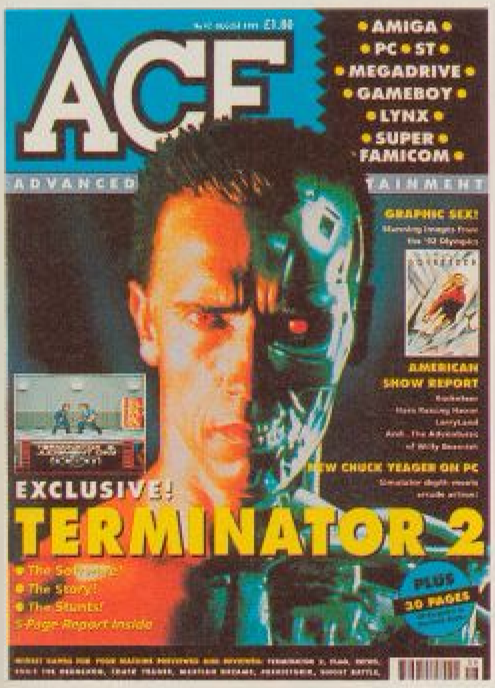
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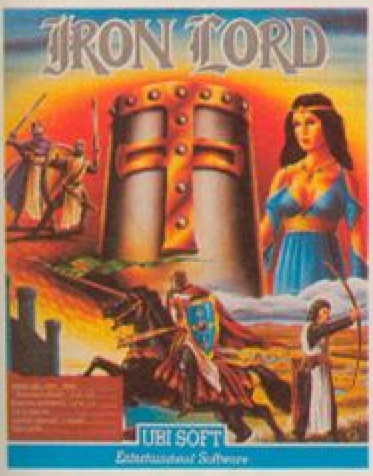

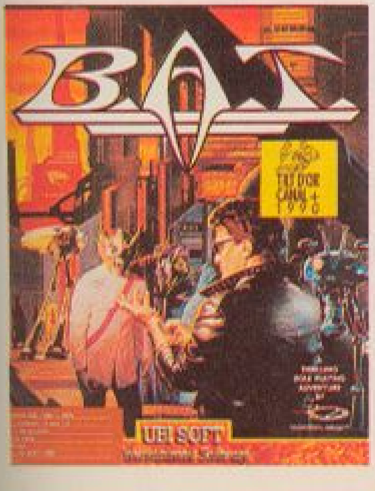

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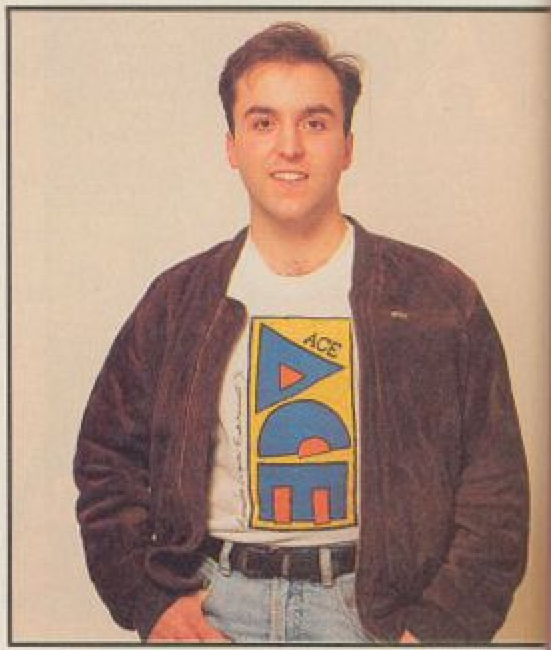

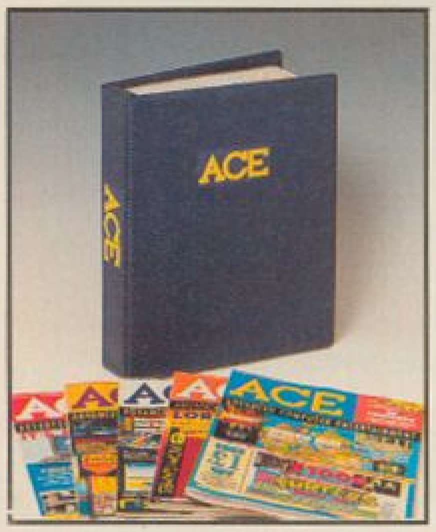

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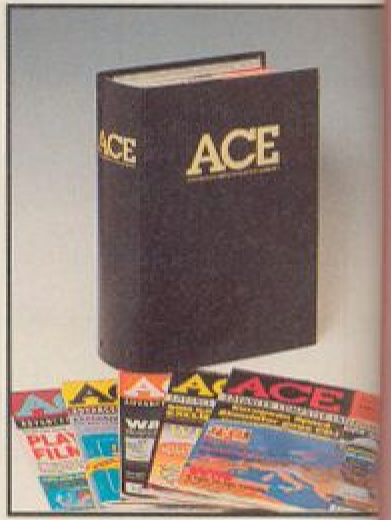

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in the PINK

Waves of tears flood from Chris' eyes as he hears the news that ACE's Games Conference has been post-poned. (Well, as you can see he's not crying at all. In fact, it's the same picture we used for last month's intro. We couldn't find one of him in tears, so use your vivid imaginations.) But last month's competition is still running. See page 122 for more details...

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92 ACE Charts

THE definitive software charts, compiled not just from data on what's selling, but also from reviews collated from ALL the UK games magazines. You simply can't get a more authoratative collection of chart data. PLUS! The ACE Stockmarket, where you get the chance to walk off with free games by predicting next month's software success stories.

96 Hardware Buyer's Guide

Thinking of upgrading, modifying, changing or adding to your computer system? The ACE Hardware Buyer's Guide is the place to be, offering the most up-to-date and easy-to-use guide to all the computers and consoles currently available. Don't be fooled by that smarmy shop assistant's sales pitch - let ACE give it to you straight!

101 Books

Look here to find the perfect bedtime companion.

103 Direct Line

More machine-specific fun for Amiga, PC, ST, Megadrive, Game Boy, Lynx, and Super Famicom owners, including news, views, previews, reviews, interviews and how-do-you-do's.

111 Hot off the Shelf

ACE's unrivalled team of experts give you the low-down on the best software currently available, as well as a round-up of the classic titles that are as important to a computer owner as sleeping and breathing.

117 Shopwatch

The mighty Dirk Longhorn gives his views on last month's letter from Mavis Nicholson regarding poor customer service.

117 ACE Back Issues

All the major landmarks in the last four years of computer entertainment were covered first by ACE - here's where to find them.

119 Public Domain

Pat Winstanley opens up her PD File and casts her ever-critical eye over the fast-moving world of free software.

121 The ACE Diary

The next 30 days in the game biz, squeezed into a single page.

122 The Blitter End

Parting is such sweet sorrow...

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ACE has brought you over 40 issues, each one packed to the brim with the latest gaming info. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, containing exclusive coverage of the first PC based VR system – then telephone 0858 410510 for availability and order details or check out p101.

ACE CHARTS

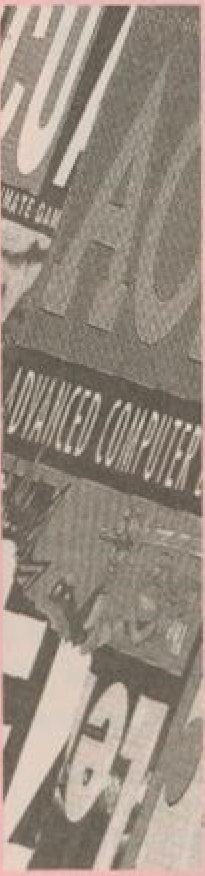
Every month the unique ACE Charts rate games NOT according to sales, but according to the review marks they got in ALL British games mags...

Each month, we collect all the available UK games magazines, and check out the review marks for each game. Then we simply work out the average mark that every game receives - the figure in the right hand column (out of 100). The higher the mark, the better the reviews. AND you can win a prize every month - see the ``opposite page.

IBM PC

Heart of China	Dynamix	94.5
Mario Andretti	Electronic Arts	87
Martian Dreams	Origin	86.47
Castles	Electronic Arts	78.44
Puzznic	Ocean	71

Not too unexpectedly, *Heart of China* moves up from last month in a disappointingly shallow PC top five. Once again, it's American games that are dominating the PC's high scores. Come on, British software houses! When are we going to see some home-grown software hitting the heights of the chart?



AMIGA

Jimmy White's Snooker	Virgin	93.45
Thunderhawk	Core Design	89.5
Hunter	Activision	87.29
Nebulus 2	21st Century	87
Manchester United Europe	Krisalis	86.96

Budget titles are shoved ceremoniously out of the way by three late summer smashes, with *Jimmy White* way ahead of the pack.

ATARI ST

Jimmy White's Snooker	Virgin	93.75
Midwinter 2	Rainbird	92.5
Hunter	Activision	89.42
Armour-Geddon	Psygnosis	89.25
Exile	Audiogenic	89

Snooker games have had mixed fortunes in the past. Archer Maclean seems to have hit the difficult nail firmly on the head.

GALLUP CHARTS

...and here's how they sold! Use the Gallup sales charts below to compare review marks with sales performance

This is the official Gallup chart - the one that reveals which games you, the public, are buying. Only one correlation this month - *Castles* on the IBM PC appears in both sets of charts. This disparity is mainly because magazine's often get review copies a while before the games hit the streets.

Our tip for the top? Well, let's put it this way - don't be surprised to see Virgin's superb *Jimmy White's 'Whirldwind' Snooker* roaring up the charts next month.

IBM PC

Lemmings	Psygnosis	£34.99
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Links	SSI/US Gold	£39.99
Castles	Interplay/EA	£34.99

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AMIGA

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Monkey Island	US Gold	£29.99
Eye of the Beholder	US Gold	£30.99

ATARI ST

Lemmings	Psygnosis	£25.55
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Flight of the Intruder	Mirrorsoft	£34.99
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THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to the Games Charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. This is the list of the companies whose games are getting the highest review marks at the moment. Having collated all the games reviewed in the latest issues of computer magazines, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we keep tabs on all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue. Occasionally a new company will enter the listings, in which case its name is marked with an asterisk. This month, we welcome Hewson's new incarnation, 21st Century Entertainment, to the ACE Stock Market. The cause for their success? Why the fantastic *Nebulus 2*, of course, which is yet to be rated by ACE. In addition, Atlantis and French gamers Lankhor make a showing.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review.

How HOT were last month's games?
After last month's appallingly low Index, this month sees a slight (0.28!) improvement, but nothing that really inspires hope for a resurgence in consistent quality software. Despite some top quality titles, the dross has once again dragged the Index into the mire.

Software index: 70.87

PUBLISHER	SCORE
Mirror Image	95
Rainbird	92.5
Sierra	89.5
Microprose	87.5
*21st Century	87
Gremlin	86.56
Psygnosis	85.21
US Gold	83.9
Code Masters	82.67
Image Works	81.34
Virgin	81.26
Action 16	78
SSI/US Gold	77.92
Krisalis	77.17
Mindscape	77.08
Activision	76.31
*Lankhor	75.39
Audiogenic	73.75
Blade	73.5
Core Design	71.63
Domark	71.4
Electronic Art	71.27
*Atlantis	71
Ocean	70.9
Infogrames	70.83

WIN A PRIZE!

If you can predict the entries in next month's ACE charts (NOT in the Gallup charts), you can win a free game for your machine. Here's how...

STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** – or write your entry on the **back of an envelope.** Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, the machine you own, your age, and the Round Number (in the box below).

STEP TWO

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the ACE charts next month. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP THREE

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:
'The top softco will be...(name of company)'

STEP FOUR

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (20th September). The address is:

ACE Stockmarket
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
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The first correct forecast for each chart taken out of the hat wins a prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize. And don't forget to include the Round Number!

THE RULES

- All entries must be received by September 20th 1991.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

THIS IS *ROUND 23*

Sorry! No room for the results this month. Next month we'll print all of outstanding the winners' names

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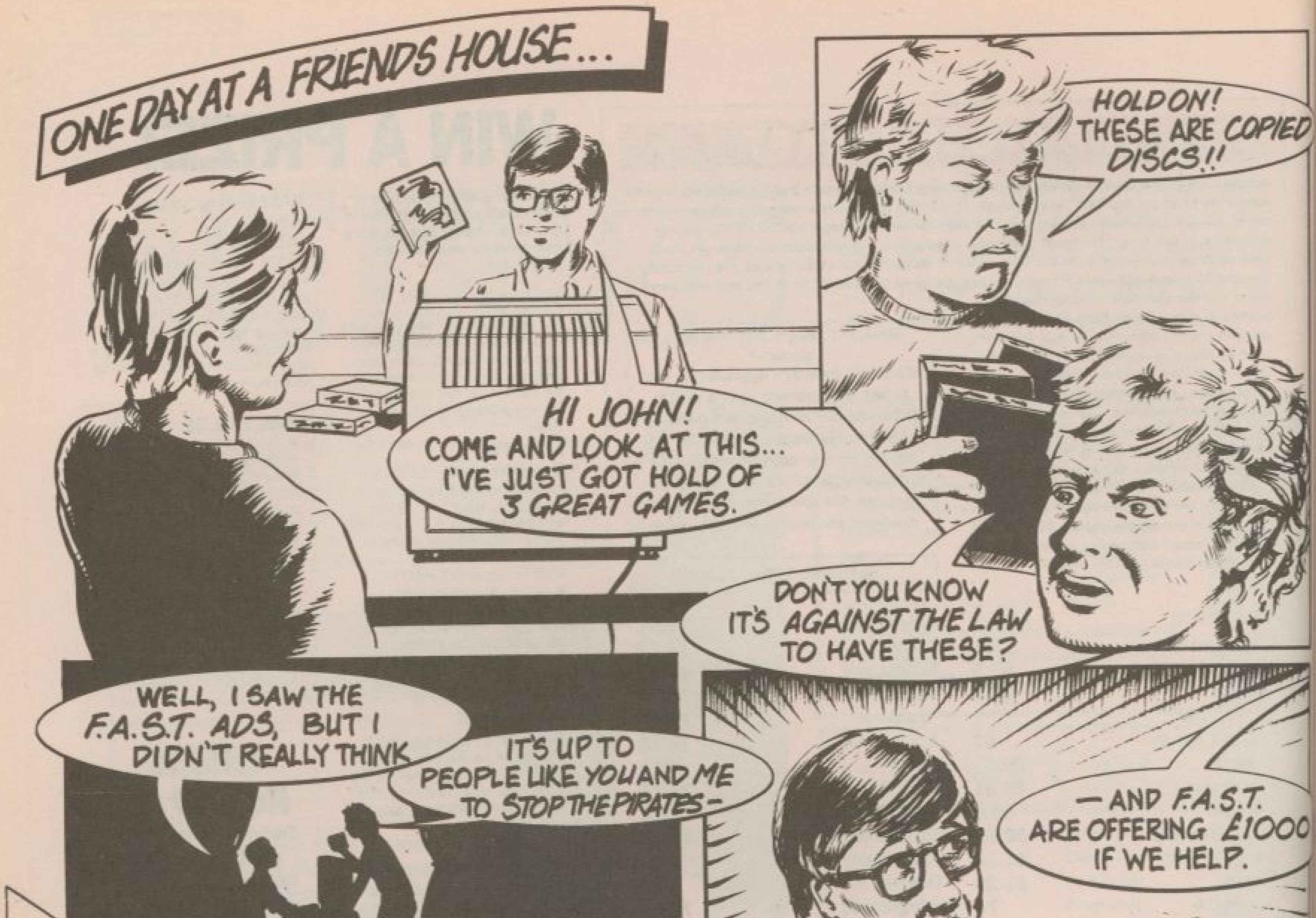

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HARD SELL

This is the very last *Hard Sell* (sob!). Next month sees this space being devoted to a host of new features, which you can find out all about on pages 48 and 49. But you never know. If you, the Great British Public demand it, *Hard Sell* may - in some form or other - appear again...

COMPUTERS

ATARI STE

Models: Atari 520STE; 1040STE; Mega STs
Package: 520 and 1040 have keyboard with built-in disk drive; Mega versions have separate keyboard. Keep eyes peeled for current software bundles.
Memory: 520STE 512K; 1040STE 1Mb; Mega ST 1, 2 or 4Mb. All machines can be expanded internally to 4Mb.
Processor: 8-MHz Motorola 68000
Recommended Retail Price: 520STE £299; 1040STE £399
Contact: Atari PR (0753) 33344

IN BRIEF

Hard days for the machine that arguably started the avalanche to 16-bit computers. The STE boasts capabilities almost on par with its arch-rival the Amiga, but the Commodore machine seems to be the one most people want these days. As shame, because this is still a great general purpose home machine for games, small business and productivity, and thanks to its MIDI port is still the number one choice for MIDI musicians.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Low-res 320 x 200; medium res 640 x 200; high-res 640 x 400
Palette: 4096
Colours: Black and white in high-res; 4 colours in medium-res; 16 in low-res.
TV: Yes.
Monitor Output: RGB.
Monitor Supplied: No.
Monitor Options: Atari monitors SM124 high-res mono; SC1442 med res colour.
Sprites: No.
Speed: Fast
***NB** High resolution display is only available on monochrome monitor; medium and low res displays only available on colour monitors or TVs.*

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: Yes
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Three 8-bit PCM stereo sound channels.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 720K
Disk Price: Around £1.50
Disk Performance: Fast, reliable.
Keyboard: 96 keys including 10 functions keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party spring kits.
Joystick/Mouse: Two joystick ports are standard; two-button mouse is supplied with machine.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Excellent. The budget market provides a relatively cheap way of building up an impressive collection of software classics.
Current Releases: None of the major software houses ignore the ST so it is well served with plenty of good software.
Games: Across the board.
Graphics: Good with some excellent software to manipulate them.
Music: Excellent. Plenty of sound samplers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice.
Prospects: Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK and the chances of a sudden boom of interest in the ST Stateside look very slim.
Software Loading: No problems at all. The STE's drive is fast and friendly to the ear. Be warned that some companies still release games on two or more single-sided discs (a hang on from the old days when the ST had single-sided drives) which can mean unnecessary and annoying bouts of disc swapping.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: Very common and quite cheap. Beware very old, single sided ST machines.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty

COMMODORE AMIGA

Models: Amiga A500; A1500; A2000; A3000
Package: A500 has keyboard and built-in drive with separate PSU; A1500 and A2000 have separate keyboard with built-in (fan assisted) PSU. A3000 is a very powerful machine indeed.
Memory: A500 512K; A1500 & A2000 1Mb; A3000 2Mb.
Processor: 500/1500/2000 7.15 MHZ Motorola 68000; A3000 16 or 25MHz Motorola 68030,
Recommended Retail Price: A500 £NA; Screen Gems £399.99; Flight of Fantasy Pack £399.99; Class Of The 90s pack £579.99 (all packs inc A500); A1500 from £999; A2000 from £1199(for 1Mb+20Mb hard disk); A3000 from £3160(for 2Mb+40Mb hard disk). (All prices inc VAT).
Contact: Commodore (0628) 770088

IN BRIEF

A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most exigent of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has overtaken the ST in the UK, though the latter machine still has a slightly larger installed base. The A1500 is near-identical spec-wise to the A2000, but cheaper. The A3000 is a top-end workstation substitute; includes *Workbench 2*, featuring enhanced icons, file handling, and security features plus *Amiga Vision*, a multi-media programming tool. A3000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 16MHz/40Mb hard disk to a 25MHz/100Mb disc.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)
Palette: 4096
Colours: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096
TV: With modulator.
Monitor Output: SCART + composite video in monochrome.
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: C1084 £349.99
Sprites: 16 in hardware + unlimited BOBS from soft/hardware.
Speed: Very fast with good software.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: No. Third party interfaces available.
Stereo Output: 2 phono connectors.
Performance: Among the best around. Custom hardware squeezes 9 octaves of 8-bit digital sound into the four channels.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5inch – 837K; A3000 40/100Mbyte hard disk formatted.
Disk Price: Around £1.50.
Disk Performance: Noisy and sluggish. Third party software is available to improve matters.
Keyboard: 94 keys. 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster.
Joystick/Mouse: Two-button mouse supplied as standard.
Interfaces: Two Joystick/mouse; stereo audio; external disk drive(s); RS232 serial; Centronics parallel printer; SCART RGB/video; composite monochrome video; expansion bus (internal on A1500 & A2000; 32-bit on A3000); clock/memory expansion on A500 only; internal PC expansion on A1500, A2000 and A3000.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Similar to the ST.
Current Releases: Everyone's doing them.
Games: Something for everyone.
Graphics: Quality and range is unsurpassed.
Music: Needs better support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to IFF standards.
Prospects: Excellent.
Software Loading: Noisy but usually reliable. Plagued by viruses.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lacked the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack.
Second Hand Availability: Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2.
Maintenance: One years guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers.

IBM PC

Model: IBM's PC was the first PC to be accepted in large quantities (not the first PC) and remains the standard by which all others are judged. There are hundreds of clones and variations including offerings from Amstrad, Atari and Commodore. In general, with PCs you pay for speed and better graphics standards. The extra money is worth it if you can afford it.
Package: Depends on the manufacturer although most are supplied with monitors. They can even be bought in kit form at no extra saving
Memory: Usually 512K or 640K. Can be anything from 64K to 1Mb+. Always go for a 640K model.
Processor: Intel 8088/8086 in base machine is sometimes replaces with the faster NEC V20/30. More expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 286, 386SX, 386 and even the latest 486.
Recommended Retail Price: Can be picked up for as little as £299 for a "no frills" machine. With top-of-the-range 486 based clones – and the official IBM versions – the sky's the limit. Look for a good EGA or VGA model for between £750 and £1200.

IN BRIEF

Superb value if you want the ultimate all-rounder, the PC still betrays its business origins. Almost every major software house now port their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic (most common) machines – which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT first choice if entertainment is your preferred use for computers, or if you cannot afford the better EGA or VGA models (which are really essential for good games playing).

GRAPHICS

The first PCs weren't fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware and come with a monitor. There are three main standards: CGA – a nasty but all to common colour display, EGA about the lowest colour display worth considering, VGA - an Amiga/ST beating display; and Hercules monochrome. EGA or VGA which are usually only fitted as standard to more expensive machines (Amstrad's PC2086 is one exception).

Resolution: CGA 320 x 200; EGA 640 x 350; Hercules 720 x 384; VGA 800 x 600.

Palette: CGA 8 (in two fixed sets); EGA 64; VGA 256

Colours: CGA 4; EGA 16; VGA 64; Hercules 2

Monitor Output: TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA); analogue RGB (E/VGA)

Monitor Options: Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes – some have amber, green or white monochrome displays – check before buying.

Sprites: None

Speed: From very slow - 8088 - to very fast - 80486

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Built-in sound is very poor. Third-party add-on sound boards such Roland (£380) and Ad-Lib (£150) - which is fast becoming a standard - provide synthesiser-quality sound through an amplifier.

MIDI: Third part interfaces available.

Stereo Output: With boards, yes.

Performance: Not the ideal machine for the musically bent – an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound purists.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 5.25in –180/360K/1.2Mb; 3.5in 720K/1.44Mb

Disk Price: 60p – £3.00

Disk Performance: Average. Most PC owners also buy hard disks. A large amount of PC applications software refuses to work unless you have a hard disk.

Keyboard: Almost as many variations as there are clones. Prefer the AT or extended AT layouts to the XT layout since it easier to use.

Joystick/Mouse: Neither supplied as standard. The better clones include a mouse or at least a mouse port, especially since IBM's WIMP system (*Windows*) has become more popular.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Vast!

Current Releases: All major software houses now produce something for the PC , with many now supporting the superior E/VGA modes.

Games: Most of the best Amiga /ST titles appear on the PC eventually.

Graphics: Given the right graphics adaptor, the PC has nice graphics and the software is usually excellent. On a standard CGA PC the graphics stink no matter how good the software is.

Music: Unexpanded it's pathetic. However, add-on boards offer some of the best sound you'll hear on a home computer.

Prospects: The PC is the eternal champion – as others fall by the wayside it carries on getting faster and better all the time. This is aided by Intel constantly improving the machine's processor and the vast user base demanding better equipment.

Software Loading: Fast and reliable; very fast from hard disk.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Watch out for package deals form large chains and mail order companies. If you don't know too much about PCs go for a name you know.

Second Hand Availability: Common but be careful you do not get a clapped out monitor/keyboard.

Maintenance: Usually one year's guarantee – but competition has forced the price of maintenance contracts down to an affordable level. This often means they fix in-situ free.

CONSOLES

ATARI LYNX

Package: Lynx. Pay extra for peripherals and inclusive *California Games*.

Processor: 16-MHz 6502

Console Memory: 64K

Recommended Retail Price: £79.99 (£99.99 with peripherals; £129.99 with peripherals and game).

Contact: Atari PR (071-388) 9871

IN BRIEF

Designed by the man behind the Amiga, the Lynx is an amazing handheld. After a shaky start, the Lynx is doing fine and - if the rumours are to be believed - is starting to take off in the States. Its most obvious competitor, the Gamegear, lacks the Lynx's frills, but makes up for it with smaller unit size and TV adaptor.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 102

Palette: 4096

Colours: 16

TV: No

Monitor Output: No

Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.5" back-lit colour LCD

Monitor Options: None

Sprites: Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!

Speed: Fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Very good

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: Four-channel, five octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Eight-way joypad.

Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-35.

Cartridge Memory: 8Mb

Existing Software Base: Very small.

Current Releases: *California Games* is a great 'freebie'.

Prospects: Uncertain but several new titles in the pipeline.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Availability: Very few

Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★

Overall: ★★★★

NINTENDO GAMEBOY

Package: Main unit with *Tetris* game.

Processor: 1-MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.

Console Memory: 8K

Recommended Retail Price: £69.99.

Contact: Deighton PR (071-836) 2973

IN BRIEF

Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics – this machine has some superb titles and games making use of the two-player link-up option are tremendous fun (especially the superb freebie *Tetris*).

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 20 x 18 characters.

Colours: 4 grey shades.

Monitor Supplied: Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.

Sprites: 40 8 x 8 pixel blocks..

Speed: Fast for what it is.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on headphones.

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: Plays a lot better than it looks.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Built-in 8-way joypad.

Ports: Headphone socket;dual-machine interface.

SOFTWARE

Price: £20-25.

Cartridge Memory: 64K

Existing Software Base: The best for any handheld.

Current Releases: Increasing

Prospects: Excellent

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Avail.: Some companies (e.g. Console Quest) do 'em.

Maintenance: One year's warranty

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★

Sound: ★★★★

Expansion: ★★

Overall: ★★★★★

NINTENDO SUPER FAMICOM

Package: Console unit, controller unit and *Super Mario World*.

Processor: 3.58 MHz 65C816.

Console Memory: Not known

Recommended Retail Price: N/A (Japan price = £100)

Contact: Local dealers

IN BRIEF

With the weight of all-powerful Nintendo behind it, the Famicom can hardly fail. Although not hugely superior to the Sega Megadrive technically, it's the games that impress - notably the bundled *Mario World* (which will no doubt help sales no end) and *F-Zero*. That said, there are some real duffers amongst the gems (*Big Run*, anyone?), but it's still early days yet. The Super Famicom's enormous games potential has barely been scratched.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 512 x 512..

Palette: 32,768

Colours: 256

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: RGB, SCART

Sprites: 128.

Speed: Remarkable

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 8 Channel custom 16-bit PCM/digital.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied.

Ports: One big expansion port.

SOFTWARE

Price: £40-50.

Cartridge Memory: 16 Mb..

Existing Software Base: Small.

Current Releases: Lots, and plenty more planned.

Prospects: How can it fail? Back orders were in the millions before it was launched.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Grey import.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: Take care- grey imports are rarely under warranty.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★★★★

Overall: ★★★★★

SEGA GAMEGEAR

Package: Gamegear unit.

Processor: 3.58-MHz Z80A

Console Memory: 8K RAM/16K Video RAM.

Recommended Retail Price: £99.99

Contact: Sega (071-727) 8070

IN BRIEF

Opinion used to be that the Gamegear was going to be the handsdown winner in the battle of the colour handhelds. But times - and, more importantly, prices - have changed. The Lynx, a technically superior machine with some fine games available for it. has had its price slashed and - if US sources are correct - is enjoying a sudden upswing in support from American consumers. In the Gamegear's favour are the clout of mighty Sega and the potential to turn the unit into a portable TV via a cheap adaptor (around £50 is current estimate). But at the moment, it's anybody's game.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 146

Palette: 4096

Colours: 16

TV: No.

Monitor Output: No.

Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.2" back-lit colour LCD.

Monitor Options: None.

Sprites: Not known.

Speed: Okay.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good.

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: Three-channel PSG sound channels + noise channel.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Eight-way joypad.

Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack; TV tuner port.

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £20-25

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Small.

Current Releases: Few as yet, but lots in the pipeline.

Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: One year's guarantee

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★

Sound: ★★★★

Expansion: ★★★★

Overall: ★★★★

SEGA MEGADRIVE

Package: Console unit, controller, and *Mickey Mouse or Moonwalker* game.

Processor: 8-MHz 68000 + Z80B

Console Memory: 74K main, 64K video.

Recommended Retail Price: £149.99.

Contact: Virgin Mastertronic (071-727) 8070

IN BRIEF

Excellent example of the new 16-bit console technologies. The first decent 16-bit console to receive official support in the UK.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 224

Palette: 512

Colours: 64

TV: Yes

Monitor: No

Sprites: 80

Speed: Very fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 12 channel stereo sound is produced by a custom FM chip and sounds fantastic.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Dedicated controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-50 (typically £35).

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Good

Current Releases: Lots.

Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Avail.: Some companies (e.g. Console Quest) do 'em.

Maintenance: One year on UK machines.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★★★

Overall: ★★★★★

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PC – £4.00 – Shareware
Fantasia Shareware (GAM-107)

Tetris addicts are in for a treat with this apparent clone from Fantasia.

Just in case you've never seen Tetris the game involves manipulating falling coloured shapes. Each piece can be rotated and moved left or right, the idea being to position the shape so that when it reaches the bottom of the well, the place it settles helps to create a solid line of colour from one side to the other.

Sounds simple? It isn't. You have no choice of which shapes will come or in what order so some frantic manipulations ensue while stacking unwanted (for the moment) shapes out of the way.

If the stack of shapes reaches the top of the screen you've lost. Each time you manage a coloured line, that line is removed from the screen, allowing shapes above to drop down. This often produces a completely different set of gaps to be filled and and necessitates a rapid tactical rethink.

Although not precisely 'state of the art', the game is simple to play with a good choice of keys. Left and right are operated by 'J' & 'L' while the the 'K' key in between rotates the shape. Tapping the spacebar accelerates the fall of the shape. Colours aren't too bad either (the KCS (Amiga) PC Emulator displays eight) but although there is a toggle for sound, I couldn't get a squeak out of the game.

This is the sort of program which either grabs or it doesn't. Personally I find it a little tedious but a friend is utterly hooked. Either way it's not too expensive to give it a try.

GAMES II

Amiga – £1.50 &50p post – PD
Vally PD

When a PD disk arrives with simply a reference number it's worth jotting a note down on the label to say what the game is about. My note for this disk was "Ol' Timers".

The disk consists of six programs including beautiful (but presumably unlicensed) conversions of Space Invaders, Missile Command, Qix and Galaxian together with a couple of puzzle games. Each is a good game in its own right and as the disk as a whole is superb value. (Although it's a shame that it appears to have been put together by software thieves – heaven knows what Atari et al think of this sort of thing.)

Newcomers to computing will be able to find out what the old hands are referring to when discussing ancient history and those who lost their old favourites through upgrading will find plenty of nostalgia.

ACE FREEBIES WORKS!

ACE knows this column actually results in more sales for participating libraries - at least one has had to be rescued from under the deluge of extra mail. So why, we wonder, do we have to put so much effort into locating suitable software? If you're running a library and want to boost your business, phone Steve Cooke on 071 251 6222 for information about editorial coverage in this section.

POM POM GUNNER

Amiga – £1.10 & 50p post – PD
Vally PD

Mindless blasting seems to have gone out of fashion these days with all the strategic elements which pepper recent shoot-em-ups. With this in mind I was pleased to find this disk in a bundle sent recently.

Set in the 2nd World War, you man an American Pom Pom gun during a Japanese air attack. As aircraft fly across the screen in pseudo 3D, the joystick controls your gunsight and the fire button your trigger. And that's about all there is to the game – but it ain't half fun.

The backdrops and planes are digitised. Despite an annoying flickering band at the bottom of the screen, atmosphere is well maintained by both graphics and sound. With such simplicity the temptation is to annihilate anything that moves – but that's not a totally good idea as I discovered when I was ticked off for shooting two friendly planes out of the sky.

If you're looking for something not too easy but taking little in the way of thought power this is an excellent contender.

FLOWER POWER

Amiga (1Mb) – £3.50 – Licenseware
AMOS PD Library (LPD27)

Len Tucker's at it again with yet another highly imaginative game. This one's really for kids but the adults who have seen it usually end up having a go too.

The aim is to grow and pick flowers while avoiding assorted nasties in the garden. Each level demands more and more flowers to be grown as the minimum entry for the local flower show.

As befits its adventure style, the gameplay sees you controlling the gardener in his task with various jobs to be tackled in order to nurture nature.

Digging a plot is followed by the planting of seeds. But seeds need to be watered to grow, and the watering can needs regular refills. If you become too distracted by the marauding garden pests and forget to water the plants they will start to droop. Only when beautiful blooms are evident may you pick the flowers and deposit them in the collecting basket.

Pests range from growling dogs to giant ladybirds, and all of them will eat your seeds and young plants if they are allowed close enough. There's no killing involved though – simply shake your fist and emit a Kung-Fu style war cry to scare the beasties away.

Animation is simple but effective and the graphics generally reflect the targeted child player. One touch which always tickles me is the way the gardener looks as though he's doing a "Prince William" while operating the watering can. The entire game is joystick controlled and frantic without being too anxious to kill you off.

SHAMELESS PLUGS!

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One of my all time favourite games has to be Breakout and Megaball is one of the best clones around. It's so good that even creaking under pressure of work I had to play for a whole afternoon – just to test it, you understand.

Although gameplay is pretty standard – hit the ball with your bat to take out all the bricks in the wall – the features included in this version make for a whole new scenario. All the old favourites are there of course – bombs, glue, shrink, expand and so on, but you also have icons which toggle tunes, turn your bat into a high powered laser, take out solid bricks or slice through them like butter. Invisible bricks cause chaos too.

With all this to contend with you tend to forget about the ball altogether. Who cares where it is when you have just made a double-elongated bat and can't move sideways far enough to avoid the bomb now on its inexorable way towards you. Highly recommended for all ages and reflexes.

See you next month!

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To YOUR micro...

Monthly machine specific columns for the users of the seven most popular machines, written from a personal viewpoint by other users...

SEGA MEGADRIVE

Riding on the back of Schwarzenegger's success with *Terminator 2*, Virgin Games and Probe Software are working overtime to get their *Terminator* video game out before the hype surrounding the second movie evaporates.

Terminator 2 is regarded by many as a brilliant action movie with some of the best special effects ever seen. Neither Acclaim or Ocean, license holders to the video game rights, are planning to produce a Megadrive adaption of the feature film. Instead, Virgin Games has stepped in with the next best thing.

Movie fans will remember the original *Terminator* motion picture as the vehicle that catapulted Austria's muscle-clad actor Arnold Schwarzenegger into megastar status. It told the story of a virtually indestructible cyborg sent back through time from a nightmarish future where machines rule the Earth. Arnie played the perfect killing machine.

Little is known about the actual game itself. Nobody at the two software companies is willing to talk about the project except to say that the intro sequence is shaping up very nicely.

Developer Probe is definitely flavour of the month with software publishers. The Croydon-based company run by sharpshooting boss Fergus McGovern is working on games based around everything from *The Terminator* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* to *Robocop* and Aliens. Now that's what I call making money Vol. 1!

Following in the footsteps of those video game extravaganzas *Fantasia* and *Castle of Illusion* starring *Mickey Mouse*, the designers at Sega have dreamed up another adventure in Disneyland.

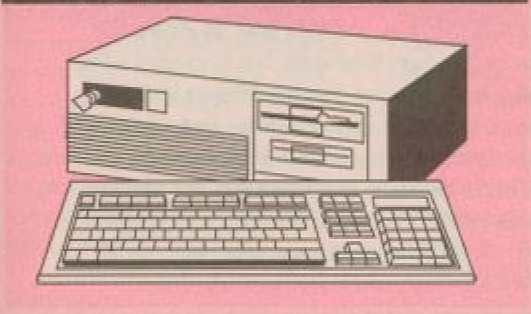
Quackshot starring Donald Duck places our grouchy friend on a treasure hunt before the rival Pete's Gang gets there first. Donald's mischievous nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie help out as the group explores the world from Mexico to the South Pole. Will our hero win the day and the love of Daisy Duck? During play, gamesters ears will ring with special samples of Donald's distinctive quacks as they glance their eyes over some right gorgeous graphics.

Have you managed to complete *Sonic the Hedgehog* yet? It's not easy controlling the hip hyperspeed hedgehog through the underground tunnels, loop-the-loops, moving platforms and other obstacle courses incorporated into the game.

You should try to remember that not all of Dr Robotnik's roughnecks can be defeated with the Super Sonic jump attack. With the spiked crabs on the Marble Zone, for instance, it's best to be a little bit sneaky and jump up into them.

● **Rik Haynes**

IBM PC



After months of speculation, Amstrad has finally announced plans to bring out a kick ass PC system geared well and truly towards gaming.

With the snappy name of PC5286 Games Pack - it must of taken the marketing suits absolutely ages to think that one up - this new package comprises a 16MHz 80286 microprocessor, one-megabyte of memory, 40-Mb hard drive, 1.44Mb 3.5-inch floppy disk drive, DOS 3.3, enhanced VGA graphics card, 14-inch colour monitor, AdLib-compatible sound board and analogue joystick.

All this will cost you the cost-effective sum of £899+VAT! Oh, I nearly forgot the custom icon-driven user interface and three games that come with it: Links (Access/US Gold), *F15 Strike Eagle II* (Microprose) and *Prince of Persia* (Broderbund/Domark). Not a bad bundle, eh?

"The small-footprint PC5286 Game Pack is both a fully compatible personal computer and a stunning games machine," says Amstrad's Sales and Marketing Director Malcom Miller, "We've deliberately selected high-specifications not just to cater for business applications, but also to match the demands of the increasing sophisticated PC entertainment software that is emerging."

ACE has long campaigned for a PC which follows a similar specification to what Amstrad is offering. I hope there is still room for a few expansion slots on-board the Amstrad PC5286 and that this baby doesn't require a science degree and three pairs of hands to set the system up. If you've bought a PC recently, you'll probably know what I mean!

The quality of entertainment software coming out for the PC is unsurpassed, especially the games from US companies like Lucasfilm Games, Origin and Sierra On-Line/Dynamix. There is no other system that can currently play the *Secret of Monkey Island II*, *Leisure Suit Larry 5*, *Heart of China*, *Wing Commander* and *Ultima VII*... five very good reasons to consider buying a PC like the one from Amstrad.

Not even the Commodore Amiga can match the 256-colours and 800x600 resolution capabilities of the enhanced VGA display. According to Amstrad, entertainment software on PC format is already outselling Atari ST versions and is 'closing fast' on the Amiga.

Megalomaniac PC players really never have had it so good. Bullfrog has just about finished an enhanced version of *Powermonger*, Gremlin is busy adapting the 'TrailBlazing' *Utopia* (see review of the Amiga version elsewhere in this issue of ACE), and Sid Meier is working on *Civilisation* for Microprose.

Who the heck is Sid Meier? None other than the programming brains behind such classics as *Railroad Tycoon*, *Silent Service* and *F15 Strike Eagle*.

Civilisation is a natural progression of Meier's previous award-winning game, *Railroad Tycoon*. Players must develop an entire civilisation from a small nomadic tribe. As the original tribe grows, smaller groups can be sent to seek new peoples, territories and trades. Tribes will be successful if the player can balance issues such as economics, politics and defence. The goal of the game, which is played over a map of the real world or imaginary computer-generated planets, is to survive from the early beginnings of 4,000 BC through to the present and into the future.

A game of *Civilisation* can be played for five to six thousand years or may be played for a specific 100-year period. Players could run into historical figures like Ghengis Khan or Napoleon! In case you've forgotten that dates and data from those boring history lessons at school, Sid baby has thoughtfully provided a 'Civilopedia' with definitions and illustrations of the terms and concepts throughout the game.

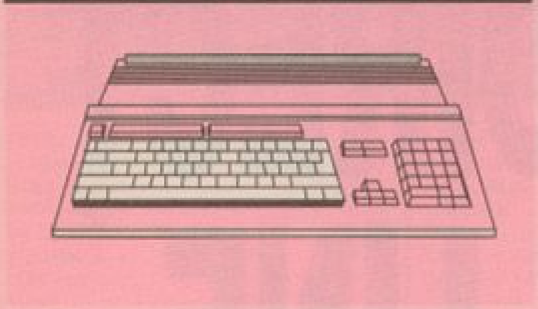
"Gamers want a continuing stream of challenging and interesting decisions to confront," says the 'King' of Simulation Software Sid Meier, "The like options, 'what if' scenarios and countervailing considerations. People can go to movies for graphics and books for storylines. They look to computers for the interaction and for stories in which they themselves are the main character."

That *'Tris* train of games from Soviet gamemaster Alexey Pajitnov and Spectrum Holobyte keeps on moving. The latest mind teaser is apparently a cross between *Tetris* and a word puzzle in motion.

Appropriately entitled *Wordtris*, players are challenged to manipulate tiles, each with a single letter, as they fall from the top of the computer screen into a well. Doesn't this all sound so familiar? Arcade puzzle addicts must carefully match up the falling letter with others already placed to form a word. Once made, the word is removed from the playing area and points are awarded.

● **Rik Haynes**

AMIGA



The hottest products in the Amiga market right now are genlocks, but many Amiga owners don't have a clue what they are or what they can do.

Genlocks have been available for professional users since video took over from film in the broadcast industry; it's only in the last twelve months or so that they have become cheap enough for almost any Amiga owner to consider buying one.

The basic function of a genlock is to synchronise the video output of the Amiga with an incoming video signal. The Amiga's background colour plane is then made transparent,. so any graphics generated by the Amiga appear superimposed over the video image, which can be from a video camera, VCR, camcorder or whatever.

The most basic application for genlocking is to caption video images; once you've shot your epic of Uncle Jim's Birthday, you can add appropriate titles and captions using your Amiga as part of the video editing process. Genlocking also allows you to produce professional-looking wipes, fades and other effects. Of course, you could also generate `complex computer animations and superimpose them over live action; anyone for a home movie version of Tron?

It's only the fact that the Amiga's screen refresh clock signal is available on the video output port that makes this process so simple; other computers which don't allow instant access to the sync signal are notoriously difficult to genlock.

Mind you, some genlocks offer more than this simple function; hence the huge disparity in costs, from £100 to over £1500. Some models have faders allowing you to balance the relative level of the computer and video signals, some have simple switches, some offer standard Composite Video output, others have the latest S-Video semi-pro quality output, some offer further facilities such as image digitising, wipe effects or mixing.

Before you choose, though, find out whether the genlock has a "foreground" mode. If not you're limited to having a single fixed transparent background colour, instead of being able to make ANY black coloured area of the computer's output, foreground or background, transparent. This limits your ability to produce fade and wipe effects.

Remember too that the sort of captions and graphics that you can generate depend not on the genlock, but on the Amiga software package you use; Deluxe Paint is a popular general package, but there are many specifically designed captioning and video effects programs which you will see advertised in the video press.

The newest and cheapest genlock is Alter Image from HB marketing (0753 686000), at around £100; plugging into the Amiga's RGB socket, it features phono In and Out sockets plus a Graphics/Video/Mixed switch on the top panel, and monitor output.

Slightly more substantial is the Rocgen RG300C (from Evesham Micros - 0386 765180), or Silica Systems - 081 308 0888), costing around £115. This requires a 12 volt external power supply, but has the advantage of a three position switch - Amiga, Overlay or Fade and a know which dissolves the image from computer to video. The RG300C generates its own video sync signal which is a useful facility, and software.

The largest range of genlocks comes from Rendale - the 8802, available at £199 from HB Marketing, is the basic model. Since it has no front-panel controls, you have to use its supplied control software if you want to switch modes, unless you want to get busy with a soldering iron and fit some extra switches. A £599 version with S-Video output is also available.

A new company dedicated entirely to selling genlocks - predictably called Genlock Ltd (Ten 0257 472887) has a large range of more expensive models. The GST Gold SP, at £549 has high quality "YC" video output facilities for those using Super VHS or Hi-8 standard video. It has RGB output as well as the usual composite, control over contrast colour and phase, and a digitiser output for use with the optional Digiview software,

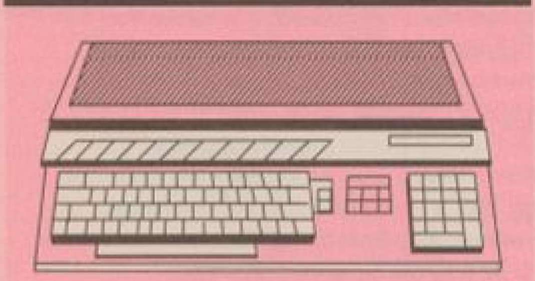
Other models from Genlock Ltd include the GST Gold Pro YC at £649, which has a front panel fader control, mains power and semi-pro connections.

Devices such as the £399 Colourpic from JCL (Tel 089275 791) have genlocking features only as incidentals; Colourpic is basically a digitiser, allowing you to add various software options to grab single frames or sequences, port them into graphics packages and manipulate them.

Though using computer with video is a field which is catching on fairly slowly, the popularity of the Amiga will ensure it reaps all the benefits of the growing trend.

●Chris Jenkins

ATARI ST



July's Olympia British Music Fair (or International Music Fair as it is now known in an attempt to broaden the range of exhibitors) is usually the launching point for loads of new music software.

This year, though, there was hardly a computer to be seen; major distributors like Evenlode Soundworks and Zone failed to appear, and the remaining exhibitors showing loads of updates but very little in the way of new product.

Good news came from distributors MCMXCIX, whose entry-level ST sequencer Trax has now been ported to the PC, Amiga and Mac,still costing only £59+VAT. Encore, the powerful Mac notation program, has been ported to the ST and PC; it can record in real- time or step-time, transcribe MIDI files, and support 64 staves with 4 voices per staff. Cost is £369+VAT.

New from Opcode is Track Chart, for all formats, a studio management program providing the engineer with on-screen mix information which can be locked to SMPTE. Printed track sheets can include information such as song titles, track names, comments, start times, track groups and virtual tracks, and while playing Track Chart can trigger user-defined MIDI messages. Cost is £139+VAT.

Sound Technology's C-Lab display featured music education programs Aura and Midia, together with the long-awaited cut-down version of the Notator sequencer/ music transcription package,

Notator Alpha was The most striking product of the Show, though, had to be Philip Rees' G2 MIDI controller. This plywood-bodied, polymer-coated MIDI controller looks like nothing so much as Mr. Spock's Vulcan harp. With six velocity-sensitive piezo pickup plates mounted where the strings of a guitar would be, the G2 has twelve button on the neck, which can be programmed to produce any note from a "strummed" plate. A knob on the end of the neck and the LCD on the body allow you to store forty "necks" of chords, giving a total of 480 chords. A thirteenth button on the neck calls up new programs, and a pressure-sensitive plate on the body allows you to introduce performance effects such as pitchbend.

In conjunction with an ST running a sequencer package, the G2 would form a powerful programming system; it will be available from around October at just over £400.

Not seen at the IMS, but launched a few weeks earlier at the trade-only APRS (Association of Professional Recording Studios) Show, was the K-AT from Friendchip, to be distributed in this country by Q-Logic, the inventors of the MIDI Metro visual timing display.The K-AT is a remote controller designed for software sequencer users; it plugs into the joystick port of the ST, and is supported by desk accessory software which lets you assign any of the 14 available control functions to any ST key, so you could for instance select sequencer controls for Record/Play/Stop/Punch-In without being anywhere near the computer. Cost will be around £65.

Also on the way from Friend-Chip are Mini-Ma'x, a 12-in 15-out MIDI patchbay; and SM'X 900, an expandable version built up from 8-out units. The function of a MIDI patchbay is to allow you to route different MIDI controllers - a sequencer, drum machine, keyboard or MIDI drum pad perhaps - to a number of MIDI sound modules. They're invaluable in a large setup, but tend to be expensive and fiddly to use. The Friendchip products, though, are MIDI-controlled using Super Ma'x, an ST software accessory which uses a series of programmable gird screen displays which can be called up from your sequencer program, re-routing your equipment as you play! Prices have yet to be confirmed.

Another good bit of ST music news is the return of Hybrid Arts after a period in the distribution wilderness. SMPTE Track, GenEdit and HA's other MIDI software packages have finallybeen picked up by Digital Music. New versions in the pipeline include Edit Track Gold V6.0 and SMPTE Track Gold V6.0 for the

ST, at £129 and £395 respectively (with an upgrade path offer from Edit Track II and SMPTETrackII); and the latest version of the generic patch editor GenEdit, at £179 for the ST.

Digital Music's most interesting new launch is an unusual product from Scorpion Systems; "sYbil" isn't a sequencer or algorithmic composer as such, but a real-time MIDI program for improvised performances. Taking simple melodies from a MIDI controller, sYbil can turn them into multi-timbral chords, complex melodies,or even program change commands. The package is available at £99

●CHRIS JENKINS

HARD SELL

Once again, a rather truncated *Hard Sell* this month. Still, it should hopefully provide an at-a-glance comparison between computer and console. Still wondering what to go for in the great 'Console or Computer?' debate? Well, if you can afford one of each, our money's on the Amiga and Megadrive. But if you only go for one, get an Amiga. It's an excellent all-round performer that gives the best VFM.

COMPUTERS

ATARI STE

Models: Atari 520STE; 1040STE; Mega STs
Package: 520 and 1040 have keyboard with built-in disk drive; Mega versions have separate keyboard. Keep eyes peeled for current software bundles.
Memory: 520STE 512K; 1040STE 1Mb; Mega ST 1, 2 or 4Mb. All machines can be expanded internally to 4Mb.
Processor: 8-MHz Motorola 68000
Recommended Retail Price: 520STE £299; 1040STE £399
Contact: Atari PR (0753) 33344

IN BRIEF

Hard days for the machine that arguably started the avalanche to 16-bit computers. The STE boasts capabilities almost on par with its arch-rival the Amiga, but the Commodore machine seems to be the one most people want these days. As shame, because this is still a great general purpose home machine for games, small business and productivity, and thanks to its MIDI port is still the number one choice for MIDI musicians.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Low-res 320 x 200; medium res 640 x 200; high-res 640 x 400
Palette: 4096
Colours: Black and white in high-res; 4 colours in medium-res; 16 in low-res.
TV: Yes.
Monitor Output: RGB.
Monitor Supplied: No.
Monitor Options: Atari monitors SM124 high-res mono; SC1442 med res colour.
Sprites: No.
Speed: Fast
***NB** High resolution display is only available on monochrome monitor; medium and low res displays only available on colour monitors or TVs.*

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: Yes
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Three 8-bit PCM stereo sound channels.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 720K
Disk Price: Around £1.50
Disk Performance: Fast, reliable.
Keyboard: 96 keys including 10 functions keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party spring kits.
Joystick/Mouse: Two joystick ports are standard; two-button mouse is supplied with machine.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Excellent. The budget market provides a relatively cheap way of building up an impressive collection of software classics.
Current Releases: None of the major software houses ignore the ST so it is well served with plenty of good software.
Games: Across the board.
Graphics: Good with some excellent software to manipulate them.
Music: Excellent. Plenty of sound samplers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice.
Prospects: Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK and the chances of a sudden boom of interest in the ST Stateside look very slim.
Software Loading: No problems at all. The STE's drive is fast and friendly to the ear. Be warned that some companies still release games on two or more single-sided discs (a hang on from the old days when the ST had single-sided drives) which can mean unnecessary and annoying bouts of disc swapping.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: Very common and quite cheap. Beware very old, single sided ST machines.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty

COMMODORE AMIGA

Models: Amiga A500; A1500; A2000; A3000
Package: A500 has keyboard and built-in drive with separate PSU; A1500 and A2000 have separate keyboard with built-in (fan assisted) PSU. A3000 is a very powerful machine indeed.
Memory: A500 512K; A1500 & A2000 1Mb; A3000 2Mb.
Processor: 500/1500/2000 7.15 MHZ Motorola 68000; A3000 16 or 25MHz Motorola 68030,
Recommended Retail Price: A500 £NA; Screen Gems £399.99; Flight of Fantasy Pack £399.99; Class Of The 90s pack £579.99 (all packs inc A500); A1500 from £999; A2000 from £1199(for 1Mb+20Mb hard disk); A3000 from £3160(for 2Mb+40Mb hard disk). (All prices inc VAT).
Contact: Commodore (0628) 770088

IN BRIEF

A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most exigent of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has overtaken the ST in the UK, though the latter machine still has a slightly larger installed base. The A1500 is near-identical spec-wise to the A2000, but cheaper. The A3000 is a top-end workstation substitute; includes *Workbench 2*, featuring enhanced icons, file handling, and security features plus *Amiga Vision*, a multi-media programming tool. A3000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 16MHz/40Mb hard disk to a 25MHz/100Mb disc.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)
Palette: 4096
Colours: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096
TV: With modulator.
Monitor Output: SCART + composite video in monochrome.
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: C1084 £349.99
Sprites: 16 in hardware + unlimited BOBS from soft/hardware.
Speed: Very fast with good software.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: No. Third party interfaces available.
Stereo Output: 2 phono connectors.
Performance: Among the best around. Custom hardware squeezes 9 octaves of 8-bit digital sound into the four channels.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 3.5inch – 837K; A3000 40/100Mbyte hard disk formatted.
Disk Price: Around £1.50.
Disk Performance: Noisy and sluggish. Third party software is available to improve matters.
Keyboard: 94 keys. 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster.
Joystick/Mouse: Two-button mouse supplied as standard.
Interfaces: Two Joystick/mouse; stereo audio; external disk drive(s); RS232 serial; Centronics parallel printer; SCART RGB/video; composite monochrome video; expansion bus (internal on A1500 & A2000; 32-bit on A3000); clock/memory expansion on A500 only; internal PC expansion on A1500, A2000 and A3000.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Similar to the ST.
Current Releases: Everyone's doing them.
Games: Something for everyone.
Graphics: Quality and range is unsurpassed.
Music: Needs better support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to IFF standards.
Prospects: Excellent.
Software Loading: Noisy but usually reliable. Plagued by viruses.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lacked the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack.
Second Hand Availability: Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2.
Maintenance: One years guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers.

IBM PC

Model: IBM's PC was the first PC to be accepted in large quantities (not the first PC) and remains the standard by which all others are judged. There are hundreds of clones and variations including offerings from Amstrad, Atari and Commodore. In general, with PCs you pay for speed and better graphics standards. The extra money is worth it if you can afford it.
Package: Depends on the manufacturer although most are supplied with monitors. They can even be bought in kit form at no extra saving
Memory: Usually 512K or 640K. Can be anything from 64K to 1Mb+. Always go for a 640K model.
Processor: Intel 8088/8086 in base machine is sometimes replaces with the faster NEC V20/30. More expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 286, 386SX, 386 and even the latest 486.
Recommended Retail Price: Can be picked up for as little as £299 for a "no frills" machine. With top-of-the-range 486 based clones – and the official IBM versions – the sky's the limit. Look for a good EGA or VGA model for between £750 and £1200.

IN BRIEF

Superb value if you want the ultimate all-rounder, the PC still betrays its business origins. Almost every major software house now port their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic

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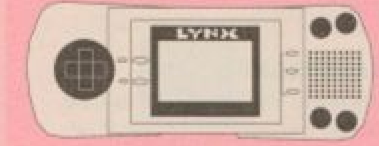
ATARI LYNX



With yet another slow month for new releases except for the superb Schwarzenegger movie, I decided to raid my cupboard full of carts and cockroaches to replay some of my favourite Lynx games. Hope you enjoy this extensive collection of cheats and taming tips that resulted from this nostalgic journey.

BLUE LIGHTNING

Press [Up] and [Down] when you crash or are shot down to continue on with the game instead of restarting at the beginning of the level.

Passwords to start on any stage:

Mission One - AAAA
Mission Two - PLAN
Mission Three - ALFA
Mission Four - BELL
Mission Five - NINE
Mission Six - LOCK
Mission Seven - HAND
Mission Eight - FLEA
Mission Nine - LIFE

Turn on the Afterburners when you take off in Mission Four and you will be rewarded with an extra bonus at the end of the level.

Watch out for the mysterious vertical runway in the clouds on Mission Seven...

CALIFORNIA GAMES

Simultaneously press [A] and [B] for a super jump on your BMX bike.

Go for a few spins when kicking your Footbag into the air.

Continually execute aerial turns on the Halfpipe event to chalk up a nice little score. Make sure you let go of [A] button at the best time to gain the maximum points. Just experiment to get it right.

Gain surfin' speed by performing small jumps, then go for a massive leap to do up to five high-scoring spins.

CHIP'S CHALLENGE

Enter the password MAND to see a demonstration of fancy fractal graphics.

Here come some later passwords...

Level 75: MJDV
Level 77: FHIC
Level 79: JINU
Level 81: SCWF
Level 83: OVPJ
Level 85: LEBX
Level 87: YJYS
Level 89: VCZO
Level 91: JPQG
Level 93: REKF
Level 95: BIFQ
Level 97: IOCS
Level 99: XUVU

ELECTROCOP

Tuck into these door codes:

Level One
Door 1: 2473 - Exit to Level Two
Door 2: 9874 - Exit to Level Two
Door 3: 8743 - Weapons
Level Two
Door 1: 3287
Door 2: 5409
Level Three
Door 1: 9284 - Exit to Level Four
Door 2: 7210 - Exit to Level Four
Door 3: 3936 - Weapons
Door 4: 7395 - Weapons
Door 5: 8294
Level Four
Door 1: 0394 - Weapons
Level Five
Door 1: 8658
Door 2: 5462
Door 3: 9973
Door 4: 7642
Door 5: 0912
Door 6: 0974
Door 7: 7865
Door 8: 4285
Level Six
Door 2: 8765 - Exit to Level Twelve
Level Seven
Door 1: 6021 - Exit to Level Four
Door 2: 5824 - Exit to Level Nine
Level Eight
Door 1: 7698 - Exit to Level Six
Level Nine
Door 1: 0170 - Weapons
Door 2: 1092
Door 3: 7102 - Weapons
Door 4: 4726
Door 5: 1375 - Exit to Level Eleven
Door 6: 2857 - Weapons
Door 7: 6998 - Weapons
Door 8: 1798 - Weapons
Door 9: 4391 - Exit to Level One
Level Eleven
Door 1: 0293 - Exit to Level Twelve
Level Twelve
Door 1: 2987 - Weapons
Door 2: 6443 - Weapons

GATES OF ZENDACON

Select the code TRYX, wait for your ship to appear, go down and right (straight through the platform), avoid the walls and enter the first gate. You're now a visitor to the secret level.

ROBOTRON 2084

Cruise missiles fired by the Brains can only be destroyed by shooting their white-tipped warheads.

WARBIRDS

Make your trusty biplane perform really tight turns by switching the engine off.

Attack aircraft from behind because there are only forward-firing machine guns in this game.

● Tony Montana

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HE'S WAITING

(most common) machines – which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT first choice if entertainment is your preferred use for computers, or if you cannot afford the better EGA or VGA models (which are really essential for good games playing).

GRAPHICS

The first PCs weren't fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware and come with a monitor. There are three main standards: CGA – a nasty but all to common colour display, EGA about the lowest colour display worth considering, VGA - an Amiga/ST beating display; and Hercules monochrome. EGA or VGA which are usually only fitted as standard to more expensive machines (Amstrad's PC2086 is one exception).
Resolution: CGA 320 x 200; EGA 640 x 350; Hercules 720 x 384; VGA 800 x 600.
Palette: CGA 8 (in two fixed sets); EGA 64; VGA 256
Colours: CGA 4; EGA 16; VGA 64; Hercules 2
Monitor Output: TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA); analogue RGB (E/VGA)
Monitor Options: Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes – some have amber, green or white monochrome displays – check before buying.
Sprites: None
Speed: From very slow - 8088 - to very fast - 80486

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Built-in sound is very poor. Third-party add-on sound boards such Roland (£380) and Ad-Lib (£150) - which is fast becoming a standard - provide synthesiser-quality sound through an amplifier.
MIDI: Third part interfaces available.
Stereo Output: With boards, yes.
Performance: Not the ideal machine for the musically bent – an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound purists.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 5.25in –180/360K/1.2Mb; 3.5in 720K/1.44Mb
Disk Price: 60p – £3.00
Disk Performance: Average. Most PC owners also buy hard disks. A large amount of PC applications software refuses to work unless you have a hard disk.
Keyboard: Almost as many
v

CONSOLES

ATARI LYNX

Package: Lynx. Pay extra for peripherals and inclusive *California Games.*
Processor: 16-MHz 6502
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £79.99 (£99.99 with peripherals; £129.99 with peripherals and game).
Contact: Atari PR (071-388) 9871

IN BRIEF

Designed by the man behind the Amiga, the Lynx is an amazing handheld. After a shaky start, the Lynx is doing fine and - if the rumours are to be believed - is starting to take off in the States. Its most obvious competitor, the Gamegear, lacks the Lynx's frills, but makes up for it with smaller unit size and TV adaptor.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 102
Palette: 4096
Colours: 16
TV: No
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.5" back-lit colour LCD
Monitor Options: None
Sprites: Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!
Speed: Fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Very good
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Four-channel, five octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Eight-way joypad.
Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-35.
Cartridge Memory: 8Mb
Existing Software Base: Very small.
Current Releases: *California Games* is a great 'freebie'.
Prospects: Uncertain but several new titles in the pipeline.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Very few
Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★★★

NINTENDO GAMEBOY

Package: Main unit with *Tetris* game.
Processor: 1-MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.
Console Memory: 8K
Recommended Retail Price: £69.99.
Contact: Deighton PR (071-836) 2973

IN BRIEF

Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics – this machine has some superb titles and games making use of the two-player link-up option are tremendous fun (especially the superb freebie *Tetris*).

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 20 x 18 characters.
Colours: 4 grey shades.
Monitor Supplied: Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.
Sprites: 40 8 x 8 pixel blocks..
Speed: Fast for what it is.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on headphones.
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Plays a lot better than it looks.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Built-in 8-way joypad.
Ports: Headphone socket;dual-machine interface.

SOFTWARE

Price: £20-25.
Cartridge Memory: 64K
Existing Software Base: The best for any handheld.
Current Releases: Increasing
Prospects: Excellent

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Avail.: Some companies (e.g. Console Quest) do 'em.
Maintenance: One year's warranty

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Expansion: ★★
Overall: ★★★★★

NINTENDO SUPER FAMICOM

Package: Console unit, controller unit and *Super Mario World.*
Processor: 3.58 MHz 65C816.
Console Memory: Not known
Recommended Retail Price: N/A (Japan price = £100)
Contact: Local dealers

IN BRIEF

With the weight of all-powerful Nintendo behind it, the Famicom can hardly fail. Although not hugely superior to the Sega Megadrive technically, it's the games that impress - notably the bundled *Mario World* (which will no doubt help sales no end) and *F-Zero.* That said, there are some real duffers amongst the gems (*Big Run,* anyone?), but it's still early days yet. The Super Famicom's enormous games potential has barely been scratched.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 512 x 512..
Palette: 32,768
Colours: 256
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: Yes
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: RGB, SCART
Sprites: 128.
Speed: Remarkable

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 8 Channel custom 16-bit PCM/digital.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied.

GAMEBOY

Oh dear. It's no fun being *The Last Ninja*. All your buddies have long since snuffed it and you seem to be the only black-garbed superhero left. This means that whenever some evil super-baddie is rampaging around the galaxy, causing mischief and naughtiness, it's up to you to sort him out. *Last Ninja 3* looks all set to put you in such a predicament when it appears late this, or early next year.

Yup, Ninja-style frolicsome antics are the order of the day as you guide your skilled fighter across several levels of arcade adventuring larks. The levels use the elements as their theme, so look out for air, wind, water and fire as obstacles. Spookily enough, the game also features 'void' as one of the elements. Fair enough, but this sees your friendly ninja transported to the depths of space, for a final battle with erm...a big dangerous geezer.

Quite how the isometric and somewhat fiddly graphics will transfer to the Gameboy's tiny screen is a bit of a mystery, but System 3's PR supremo Adrian Cale assures us that he has top boys working on the job and the conversion will be big, clever and very smartly dressed.

There's no need to get jealous. All those Gameboy owners who looked with envy at the reviews of Famicom stonker *Gaemon Warrior* should fret no longer. Our top secret Japanese sources, have reliably informed us that the same game is now available on the humble Gameboy, without the aid of custom graphics chips and a 16 bit processor. The game itself is a rather spanky mix of RPG and arcade adventure.

The game contains lots of hidden surprises, including sub-sections with fully playable mini games. One of the first of these is a *Breakout* clone and you should have no problems finding that. Word has it though, that later sub-games include a whole level of *Gradius* (*Nemesis* as we know it over here). The big problem with *Gaemon Warrior* though, is the all Japanese text. Still, if you can figure out the difference between yes and no, then you can probably do well using a system of trial and error. The game is apparently almost identical to its Famicom big brother and features neat and detailed graphics accompanied by a very slick soundtrack.

Saving piles of rocks doesn't sound like the most logical of pursuits. No surprise then that this is the theme of a very odd sounding Japanese Gameboy title. *Rubble Saver* is the name of the game and it really is quite smart. It's a scrolling platform shoot-'em-up featuring elements from lots of games, but looking very much like *Turrican*.

You control a robotic exoskeleton, bouncing its way through the icy wastes of space, destroying aliens and picking up extra weapons as it goes. The platforms are very tricky to negotiate and the levels require some degree of mapping. If the little robotic sprite takes a hit, out pops a little girl, complete with pigtails and a smile, then she then whips out a massive weapon and starts blasting. If you keep her alive long enough, you are awarded once more with the protection of the exoskeleton. There are lots of levels to explore and more blasting action than you can shake a stick at. Don't be put off by the simplistic graphics, they hide a game of enormous depth and addiction. A must for Gameboy shoot fiends and a groovy addition to anyone's collection.

TAME THE GAME

If your *Pipe Dream* cart has lost its allure and you fancy something a bit different, then try entering TETRIS on the password screen for a sub-game of...guess what!! Yes, *TETRIS*!

Solve all your *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* woes with this rather spanky cheat. When you start running out of valuable energy, just hit the pause button and push UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, A and B and when you unpause, you'll discover a massive new deposit in the royal bank of energy bar.

Played *Op C* to death? Bored? Only buy the cart to hear the funky soundtrack in the first place? What you need my son, is a sound test mode and here, for your delectation, is just that. On the title screen, push UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT and START to scratch and mix and ill and chill with that danceable commotion of groove filled greats.

Ghostbusters fans can hear their fave raves by pressing SELECT and B together when asked to continue.

● **Frank O'Connor**

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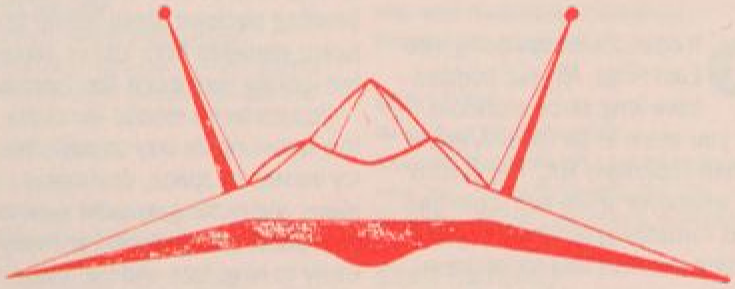

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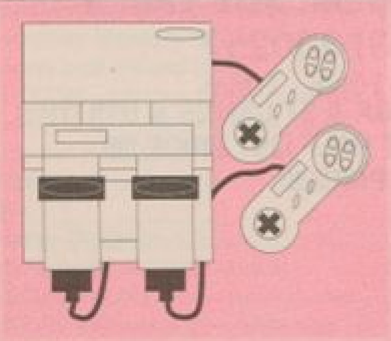

Everybody is producing fancy joysticks to make your favourite games run more smoothly on the top Nintendo console. I'll try to give you a brief rundown of the latest sticks available for the Super Famicom without resorting to any phallic gags or shafting titillation...

The Super Joy Card from Hudson Soft looks like a pregnant version of the Nintendo controller that comes with your machine. For around £10, you get autofire select switches for each of the X, A, Y and B buttons. Contact Hudson Soft on (01081-33-3260-4622) for further details. That's if your Japanese skills are up to scratch!

For the same price as the Super Joy Card you could go for the slightly less advanced Hori Super Commander. This only has a single plastic bit for selecting normal, turbo or continuous fire on all the buttons. Hori also makes AV Selector and Super Turbo add-on gadgets for the Super Famicom.

My personal favourite at the moment, ASCII Pad, comes in at just over £12 and features individual turbo and auto selectors for all six fire buttons. Additionally, there's a slow motion capability which works fine with games like *Final Fight* and *Gradius III* to give ASCII pad owners a handy edge over other players.

For the big mother of Super Famicom replacement joypads, look no further than the JB King from Halkin Industries. This deluxe device is the Rolls Royce of game controllers and even incorporates rotary dials to independently adjust the rate of fire. For real style, the fire buttons are located on a disc which can be rotated around to suit the button-configurations of different games. Oh, I nearly forgot to mention the built-in slow motion feature and the fact that the directional pad has been replaced by a proper micro-switch joystick. There's no mistaking it, this baby is class. JB King costs around £30.

IT'S SHOWTIME

Let's go on with the show. The recent Famicom Show at the Makuhari Messe International Exhibition Centre on the outskirts of Tokyo quickly turned out to be showcase for the next generation of Super Famicom video games.

Over 50 Japanese software houses were displaying the latest wares for the Famicom, Gameboy and Super Famicom video game systems. There were nearly 30 titles for the 16-bit machine among a total of 150 games on display.

Super Ghouls ' Ghosts was probably the best Super Famicom release there, though Irem's *Super R-Type* grabbed visitors attention straight after they'd seen the knights and zombies fantasy from Capcom. *Final Fantasy IV* was also looking good.

The designers at Square - yeah I know it's a stupid name for a software company - have used Graphics Mode 7 to produce excellent scaling effects on the landscapes in *Final Fantasy IV*. Players are treated to a massive eight megabit cart with the very best in Japanese role-playing capers. This sort of quality doesn't come cheap so *Final Fantasy IV* costs a hefty ¥8,800 (around £35). By the way, it's not unusual for punters to queue for hours outside their local software emporium when a *Final Fantasy* game is first released.

Jaleco's *Super Professional Baseball* and *Gamba League Baseball* from Epic/Sony are rivals for the attention of would-be Bo Jackson's out there. Tom Selleck, one of the stars from *Three Men and a Baby*, is about to appear in a feature film all about the Japanese baseball scene. Bet you can't wait!

You've probably never heard of the SD Gundam animated characters, but they're a cult hit in Japan. Sort of like those *Transformers* toys, these battle robots are more popular in this country than *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* are in Britain! Taking advantage of this lucrative marketing opportunity, Banpuresto has developed *SD Battle Dodgeball*. The result is a crazy futuristic war of sports between the SD droids and other famous Japanese cartoon characters of bygone days. You may just recognise some of them from the myriad of *Godzilla* monster movies that were made during the 1970's. Who said Japan wasn't a country of culture?

KICK OFF SCORES!

Regarded as the best football simulation of all time, *Kick Off* on the Super Famicom should be on the glitzy streets of Japan as you read this. Grey imports to your country may take a little longer.

Apart from the name change to *Pro Soccer*, it's apparently enjoyed an easy transition from computer software to video game cartridge. Imagineer is handling the project. This veteran console conversion house has already enjoyed considerable success with the best-selling Super Famicom adaptions of *SimCity* and *Populous*. Will *Kick Off* make the perfect hat-trick?

Unlike you European joystick jockeys, it seems us Japanese players can't hack the speed of Anco's great game of football. An inside source told me the game runs a little slower than the computer versions. Nevertheless, I can't wait to give it a goal. Ouch!

● **Toshiyuki Kawakita**

HOT OFF THE SHELF

Do you know, I hate writing the intro to *Hot Off The Shelf.* I mean take this month, for example. What on Earth is there to say about the Merry Month of... er... September? Nothing, that's what!

Surely you know the score by now: the top games from the last three months sliced 'n' diced for your delectation. Oh, and there's a smattering of classics too. Read on...

BATTLE CHESS 2

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99

Sequel-itis spreads from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a river bisecting the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an 'Imperial Palace'. As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces 'taking' each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from floppies due to all the disc swapping , a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A game that should keep even the most jaded Chess fan happy.

★ ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

BOULDERDASH

Victor Musical Industries ● Gameboy ¥3400 (Import)

Yet another steal from the aging C64's catalogue of great games. Hey kids, remember this? Guide cute and cuddly Rockford around umpteen (that's journo-speak for more than can be counted on one hand) mazes of boulders and meanies in pursuit of diamonds. But bear in mind that digging around boulders can make them tumble down on your head! An arcade puzzle game of the most addictive kind and yet another game ideally suited to Nintendo's B&W handheld wonder.

★ ACE RATING 908 ON GAMEBOY

CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £TBA ● Atari ST £TBA ● PC £29.99

The two previous Chuck Yeager games were exemplary in every respect save one: there were no guns! Fine for the Ban-The-Bomb/Wear-Flowers-In-Your-Hair brigade, but more than a little disappointing for the rest of us. This latest outing with the grizzled old vet rectifies that complaint... and much more besides. Pilots can fly 'planes from either WW2, Korea or Vietnam in a number of missions. Even more fun is the ability to pit, say, a Mustang from WW2 against a Phantom from Korea. High realism means this isn't one for the pick up 'n' play brigade, but it's a fine purchase for the sim fan looking for a challenging and long-lasting experience.

★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

F-14 TOMCAT

Activision ● Amiga £TBA ● Atari ST £TBA ● PC £TBA

One can't help feeling that *F-14 Tomcat* is going to have something of an uphill struggle to be noticed, what with the recent release of a whole slew of top-notch flight sims, such as US Gold's *Jetfighter II* and *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat.* To be perfectly honest *F-14* is inferior to both these competing titles, but it's still a high-quality product. The biggest criticism is that it's very hard to lose. Eject and let the jet crash into the desert and nine times out of ten Command will return you to active duty without even a ticking off.

★ ACE RATING 854 ON IBM PC

FLAMES OF FREEDOM: MIDWINTER 2

Microprose ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● IBM PC £TBA

Now this is a challenge; how do you sum up a huge game like *FoF*? The big thaw has set in, and Midwinter is now Agora, the island HQ of the Atlantic Federation. You play one of their crack agents with the task of scuppering an impending attack by the evil Saharan Empire. The majority of the game takes place in a massive solid-3D world, with your spy able to use any mode of transport he/she may come across, everything from on-foot to helicopter. But this is no shoot-'em-up. There's more than enough strategy and subterfuge to keep any non-arcade fan happy. A major contender for game of the year - already!

★ ACE RATING 950 ON ATARI ST

4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99

This violent clash between two solid-polygon generated pugilists is the best rendition of the 'noble art' yet seen on a home computer. The use of polygons allows the action to be viewed from absolutely any angle, and a video playback option allows you to watch that decisive upper-cut again and again. Highly realistic, some great polygonated expressions of anguish on the fighter's faces, a huge range of moves and a lot of work to be put in if you're to become World Champ!

★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

GODS

Renegade ● Amiga £25.53 ● Atari ST £25.53 ● PC £TBA

Renegade crash onto the game's scene with this, their first release - and what a corker it is too! Set in Ancient Greece, the player controls a hunky warrior who must be guided through four levels of platforms, monsters and puzzles to a face-off with Something Very Nasty in the Underworld. Okay, so Renegade win no prizes for the written-by-computer plot but the implementation is something else - superb graphics, intelligent aliens (and they are smart, too!) and bags of clever surprises and secret bonuses to discover. It seems

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POST SCRIPT. Two libraries that advertised budget prices in this magazine last month came to us for their PD and paid with worthless cheques! (This shows two things: 1) Even other PD libraries acknowledge NBS as the best supplier. 2) If you used either of these two libraries last month, you will be very lucky to see your goods!

LATEST PUBLIC DOMAIN

M276	THE SECT: MEGA-CONCERT	Very nicely presented mixed music dish. Good disk.
M288	AL PEPSI: WOOOOAAARRGH! NEW SHOES (1 meg)	Excellent presentation, for this Thrashy music disk.
M293	METAL:	Thrash music from Tellyvesin and Anthrax. Heavy!
M257/8	SILENTS BLUESHOUSE MUSIC/GAME (2 disk set)	Certainly the best we have ever seen from silents.
P043	JUGGLER 2 (2 meg)	Combination of the original Juggler and the Juggette demos.
P044/5	ANTI-LEMMINGS DEMO (2 disks, 2 meg)	It is superb. Stealthy bomber meets the lemmings. Great hummour.
G167	GREAT GAMES VOL 2 (1 meg)	The games are: Air Ace, Sea Lance, and S-Ball. All good.
G169	SERENE (1 meg)	Game created with the Shoot 'em Up Creation kit.
G170	MEGABALL	If you are into Breakout games, this one is a must, its superb.
G171	ZEUS	This is a simple but addictive puzzle game.
G173	GO LOOBY (1 meg)	Cutesy game created with SEUCK.
G174	ASSASSINS GAME COMPILATION	5 good games. Tanx, Rollerpede, Tritris, plus 2 more. Recommended.
G170	MEGABALL	Surely the best ever Freakout clone available on PD brill shareware programs from Ed & Al Mackey.
G199	SEVEN TILES	Superb speedball type game. Brilliant quality. The best ever PD game.
H628	YET MORE CUTE ANIMATIONS 1	Our hero Chuck in 3 more anims
D292/3/4	PAH! SIMPLE STUFF VOL 10/11/12 (1 meg)	3 Separate disks of the best demos around.
D287	DARKNESS MEGADEMO 2	Original loader. Demos are fair, though originality is sparse.
D284	THE FLAME ARROWS: PLASMUTEX	Ah Ha!! Something a little bit special. Amazing dots. Super music.
D285	CASCADE MEGADEMO	A good freaky coma type part. Ends with a beautiful eye!
D267	BASS MEGADEMO	Powerful housey music throughout.
D270	GLOBAL TRASH BY SILENTS	Another great offering from the silents.
D271	VECTRA: SINKING DEMAND (1 meg)	Slides, animation, and some strange but remarkable graphical effects.
D441	THE INVISABLE WORLD	Who did you sleep with last night? No-one? Wrong, you had several million partners. See this and itch!

MORE THAN MUSIC (M 269)
Another of the brilliant music disks from ALCATRAZ. Well over 10 mins long, a must for all Amiga music fans. Great animated intro, do not miss it .

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MINT CONDITION (H 616/7)
A brilliant set of animations which are all amusing jokes. Good artwork, and a good 10 mins of entertainment. Some jokes may offend! 2 disks set, 1 meg required. (cert PG)

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L004	(GAME) THINGAMAJIG	(1 meg) Simple jigsaw puzzles writen for children. 24 in all.
L005	(GAME) JUNGLE BUNGLE	(1 meg) An icon driven adventure game, again, written withchildren in mind.
L006	(GAME) PUKADO	(1 meg) A good game of good quality, and what licenceware shouldbe all about.
L007	(GAME) 4 WAY LYNX	Similar principal to pipemaniabut harder!
Loo8	(EDUC) WORK AND PLAY	(1 meg) 3 Educational games for children. Telling the time and Maths.
L010	(EDUC) THE WORD FACTORY	(1 meg) A spelling and memory game. Good reviewsbut I'm notimpressed.
L011	(GAME) GO-GETTER	(1 meg) A good computer version of what would make a goodboard game. Worth a look.
L012	(GAME) HYPNOTIC LAND	(1 meg) Similar to klax but balls not blocks.
L013	(GAME) JIGMAINA	(1 meg) More jigsaw fun, inc construction kit.
L014	(EDUC) PLAY IT SAFE	(1 meg) A great idea to teach safety in the home to young children. Exceptionally good idea.
L016	(GAME) REVERST 2	An updated and much improved version of this classic game.
L017	(GAME) DOGFIGHT 2	(1 meg) A game for up to 8 players but 6 of them have to crowd around the keyboard. Hectic!!
L019	(GAME) X -IT - 50	An original game concept. Well presented and complete with level designer.
L020	(UTIL) WORDY	A wordprocessor written in AMOS! Lots of facilities and Epsom compatable for printing.
L021	(QUIZ) QUINGO	(1 meg) A quiz / bingo game. 3000 questions !!
L022	(UTIL) LC10 FONTS	Useful utility to install 10 extra fonts into your LC10 or LC200 printer.
L023	(GAME) ESP	Fascinating puzzle game, move around the board to collect the letters E, S, and P.
L024	(GAME) THE SHINING WAY OF KUNG FU	Good beat 'em up. (2 disk set 1 meg £3.50)
L025	(GAME) THE MISSION	Excellent text adventure game written in the classical style. (1 meg)

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that the Bitmaps can do no wrong. Roll on *Magic Pockets*.

★ **ACE RATING 908 ON AMIGA**

HEART OF CHINA

Dynamix/Sierra ● Amiga £TBA ● IBM PC £40.85

Set in the 1920s Asia, you play 'Lucky' Jake Masters, a down-on-his-luck pilot who's started turning to the bottle for solace. Desperate for money you accept the job of finding the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy businessman, a task that takes you deep into the heart of revolutionary China... It all adds up to a rip-roaring adventure through the East, featuring an exciting plot, the ability to switch between characters, apt arcade sequences, some gorgeous VGA graphics and highly atmospheric soundtracks. Every Dynamix release improves on the last, and *Heart of China* is no exception. An essential purchase for your PC.

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC**

JETFIGHTER II

Velocity/US Gold ● Amiga £TBA ● IBM PC £39.99

Designed by Bob Dinnerman (of *F/A-18 Interceptor* fame), this is arguably the best flight sim on PC. Boasting a huge 125 missions and some state-of-the-art 3D, the accent is firmly on playability rather than rigorous technical accuracy. One of the cleverest features is the Adventure, in which you play a deadly game of tactical Chess with an enemy invasion force, first flying an attack mission then defending against the enemy's counter-attack, with the aim of driving the enemy forces back and eventually out of America.

★ **ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC**

LEMMINGS

Psygnosis ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99

In an age of ever-faster vector graphics and smoother parallax scrolls, Psygnosis was the last company expected to release a simple-looking game based on the suicidal tendencies of some cutesy little rodents. The object of the game is beautifully straightforward - you must guide a certain number of randomly-meandering lemmings to safety from one end of a perilstrewn level to the other.. You can endow chosen lemmings with a range of special abilities, such as climb or dig, with which you can get them past traps and obstacles. Incredibly playable and addictive, it's a game that will hopefully encourage programmers to spend more time on a game's gameplay

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON AMIGA**

LOGICAL

Rainbow Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99

Will this game make you lose your marbles? This latest addition to the ranks of arcade puzzlers presents the player with a 'board' made up of gulleys and rotatable dials. Marbles roll down the gulleys and can be slotted into one of four slots in each dial. The aim is to explode all the dials on the board by filling all four dial slots with marbles of the same colour. It all starts of easily enough, but later levels feature complications and restrictions far too bizarre to go into in the small space available here. Infuriatingly addictive.

★ **ACE RATING 895 ON ATARI ST**

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE

Krisalis ● Amiga £25.99 ● Atari ST £25.99 ● PC £29.99

With the original *Manchester United* selling over 100,000 copies, I suppose a sequel was inevitable. This time around you can try and take 'the Boys' to victory in the UEFA, European and Cup Winner's Cups. The game is viewed in side-on pseudo-3D, and while it's not the fastest footy game around (the classic *Kick Off* still holds that title) it's without doubt the prettiest, with a wide range of animations for nearly all the footy moves. Add the polished-till-it-gleams front end and some nice player manager elements, and you have a great allrounder for any fan of the National Sport.

★ **ACE RATING 855 ON AMIGA**

MARTIAN DREAMS

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £36.99

Game scenarios don't come much weirder than this. By means far too contorted to go into here, the player is accidentally shot through Space to Mars inside a Jules Verne-inspired Space Bullet. If this wasn't strange enough, also along for the ride are such contemporary luminaries as Sigmund Freud and Nikola Tesla! Once crash-landed on the Red Planet, the adventure really begins, with vicious vegetables on the prowl, the survivors of a previous Bullet expedition to find and the ruins of a dead civilisation to explore. Origin fans won't be disappointed and neither will anybody else.

★ ACE RATING 928 ON IBM PC

PIPE DREAM

El/Lucasfilm ● Gameboy £25 (Import)

Most readers will probably be more familiar with this game under its original title of *Pipemania*. All the action takes place on a 10 x 7 grid. Using a cursor you have to drop varying sections of piping onto the grid, with the aim of making a pipeline for 'flooz' to flow down. Should the flooz leak before it has passed through a set number of pipe sections then it's game over. Later levels introduce directional pipes (the flooz MUST flow a certain way) and obstacles. Infuriatingly addicitive - it's the sort of game the Gameboy was designed for.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON GAMEBOY

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund/Domark ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99

A game that could so easily go unnoticed and unloved by the shelf-scouring hordes looking for the latest licence. The graphics, when static, are fairly unimpressive (although they do get better on the later levels), but when they move... The animation as you guide a young Prince through umpteen levels of platforms, pits, spikes and swordsmen is quite excellent and life-like. And the gameplay, although it may sound uninspired, is as good as the graphics. Some of the action has a real *Indy*-style cliff-hanger aspect to it. Miss this and you'll be crying for weeks!

★ ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA

R-TYPE

IREM ● Gameboy £24.99 (Import)

In one fell swoop, this conversion of the classic coin-op snatches the crown of Top Gameboy Shoot-'Em-Up from *Nemesis*. All your old favourites are here: The Force; beam weapon power-up; Giger-esque end-of-level aliens; frantic actions; sweaty palm excitement. How do the programmers manage to pack so much into such a small package? Only IREM have the answer! If there's one niggling fault it's the warbling soundtrack, which cuts out annoyingly everytime a sound effect is played.

★ ACE RATING 820 ON GAMEBOY

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ● Amiga £TBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World. A good yarn well told and - hard to believe I know - actually *better* than *Ultima VI*.

★ ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Lucasfilm/US Gold ● Amiga £25.99 ● Atari ST £25.99 ● IBM PC £25.99

Monkey Island is the latest in the series of animated graphic adventures pioneered by Sierra but now proving a nice little earner for Lucasfilm. You play Guybrush Threepwood whose ambition is to become a fully-fledged pirate. This entails a lengthy (30 hours is Lucasfilm's

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estimate) quest through a world populated by scurvy knaves and assorted cut-throats. Game interaction is made easy-as-pie by the simple point-'n'-click control. By turns both tense and funny, the absorbing atmosphere is only slightly marred by the overuse of the '™' symbol.

★ **ACE RATING 922 ON AMIGA**

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Sega/Virgin ● Megadrive £34.99

Aaaah, *Sonic the Hedgehog*. At last a quality title for Sega's little black beauty that really shows what the machine can do in the hands of the inspired. It certainly makes up for the likes of *Ka•Ge•Ki* and *Midnight Resistance*. Believe me, you've never seen a platform game move this fast. And thankfully, clever game design has ensured that high speed doesn't mean high unplayability. But better than *Mario*? Well, perhaps not. It lacks the Nintendo giants depth and long-lasting challenge. But it's a cracking game, none-the-less, and you'd be a right fool to miss it. Can't wait for *Sonic 2!*

★ **ACE RATING 925 ON SEGA MD**

STRIDER

Sega/Virgin ● Megadrive £39.95

This coin-op conversion was reviewed some time ago on home computer. Thankfully, the Megadrive incarnation is supremely superior - if you didn't know better you'd swear you were playing the arcade machine. Strider Hiryu has to jump and tumble through levels of arcade-perfect action. Stunning for its graphics, sound and gameplay, *Strider* is a must-buy for any Megadrive owner.

★ **ACE RATING 919 ON SEGA MD**

SUPER MARIOLAND

Nintendo ● Super Famicom (inc. with grey-import console)

Could this be the best platform game available? The game follows the seemingly never-ending adventures of Mario, as he jumps and joy-rides his way through 99 sub-levels of platform action. What makes the game so special - apart from its superlative graphics, stunning sound FX and super-satisfying control - is the never-ending variety in the gameplay; it's not all just running and jumping. Complete this and you can consider yourself a real games supremo.

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON FAMICOM**

SPACE QUEST IV

Sierra On-Line ● Atari ST £TBA ● Amiga £TBA ● IBM PC £34.99

Top-Quality goofball space adventure with lots of humour and minimal dithering around. Sierra have managed to combine excellent graphics and a bizarre-yet-comprehendable time-travelling story line. Guide Roger Wilco through a roller-coaster adventure involving absolutely no typing and some excellent puzzle-design. Every location contains a surprise! Not too good if you own a slow PC, and is virtually unworkable from floppies. Otherwise, a pretty essential purchase if you can put up with the constant craziness.

★ **ACE RATING 880 ON IBM PC**

WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but radically uses of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface gloss. Sadly only best appreciated on the high speed PC.

★ **ACE RATING 949 ON IBM PC**

WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, teeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. The future of adventure games is here. An essential buy.

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC**

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FICTION

Welcome again, dear reader, to those pages like they have in The Lady and other magazines for girls to read when they're having a coffee break. We're sure that you, like us, are enthralled and fascinated by the plots of today's computer software, and wish that every game you could buy would have one of those fantastic novella things inside. And so, gather your favourite scatter cushions around you and ready yourselves for this month's blistering tale of passion inspired by Virgin's latest potboiler Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker... *(oh, and a bit of* Backdraft*)*

LOVE ON THE GREEN BAIZE

By Jim Douglas and Gary Whitta

(AUTHORS' NOTE: We had some complaints last month from a few readers who had problems reading the small text, so this month comes to you in a special Large Print edition.)

August 27th 1976. The sky-blue silk of Rex Hexagon's dress-shirt stretched imperceptibly to accommodate the 6'4" player's almost equinely athletic shape. Leaning over the baulk end of the slate and oak arena that to some was a snooker table but to Rex was his whole life, he drew back his freshly chalked cue and rested it in the groove of his unnaturally handsome cleft chin. Rex was about to break off in the biggest match of his career. And although no-one, not the packed crowd of predominantly female fans, not Rex's gorgeous and adoring wife Tessa, and least of all Rex's twin flaxen-haired darlings, his boys Dex and Rex Jnr knew it yet, it was about to become the match which would change all of their lives. Forever.

Eyes gliding up and down the cue like laser sights going up and down something, Rex's eyes performed their regular routine with faultless accuracy, ensuring everything on the table was as it should be and preparing for the enormous mental calculations necessary to observe every ricochet, bounce and tangent that would result from his initial shot. Rex alone could appreciate the geometric beauty resulting from the chaotic cascade of colour ensuing from the break.

In slow motion Rex flexed his pecs and his other muscles too and drew back the cue. And with almost Biblical force and concentration he smote the cue ball with his stick, driving the ivory sphere up the table and into the pack of reds. In a flash Rex was up and chalking his cue again. Seating his greasy opponent with a withering glance, Rex strutted around the table like a big lion, every inch of his taught frame ripped and ready to sink a ball or wrestle a crocodile. No-one could ever be quite sure.

Twenty minutes later, after a lesson on potting and cue control which left the women moist with perspiration and the men feeling immasculated and incontinent, Rex was cleaning his cue with his towel and sipping a glass of cool iced lemonade, not that he needed it. He was one frame up and on a roll. He even allowed a brief smile to cross his normally stern yet undeniably handsome lips. Rex was feeling good. He would win this title, collect the prize money and take the wife and kids away on a big expensive holiday. Life was sweet. He flashed his cobalt-blue eyes up into the audience where Tessa sat. She waved her little handkerchief at him and mouthed "I love you" through her tears of joy and love and delirious, all enveloping happiness.

As hard-but-fair referee Len Jones racked the reds and fiddled around with the black ball, the players sat contemplating the next frame. Well, Rex contemplated the next frame. His opponent, a player who's name he didn't bother to catch - one hotshot pot punk seemed very much like another - simply sat wondering whether he should give up now. They'd always joked in his local snooker club and even in the practise matches about the instant defeat and humiliation guaranteed whenever a player went up against the Hex. But he never thought he would have to face it so soon.

Then, as Rex sipped another mouthful of his thirst-quenching trademark lemonade he felt an icy jab of pain grip his body. Shooting down his left side and up into his brain, the pain's evil tendrils enveloped and pierced Rex's warm and loving heart, squeezing it until he thought it may collapse. Unkeen to draw attention to what may simply be a bit of cramp, Rex rose to his feet (to the spontaneous and generous applause of the audience) and took a couple of unsteady steps towards the table.

Ref Len gently jabbed Rex in the arm, acknowledging his great friend and mentor's jape. But this was no joke. The audience gasped and women cried as the 7'13" frame of towering sinew skyscraper toppled like a huge, magnificent Cedar tree onto the baize, shattering the slate and sending balls flying into the air.

Agog with horror and surprise, Dex and Rex Jnr sat in the audience and watched their dad slip away before them. And as the crowd rose to their feet and began to scream and wail and cry because they knew their hero had gone forever, the boys silently and solemnly turned to each other and knew then what they must do.

1991.

The black limousine rocks backed gently back and forth on its super-cushioned suspension and the rear-most doors opened with a hydraulic hiss. There was a momentary glint of immaculately-polished patent leather as Rex Hexagon Jnr's leg extended from the luxurious darkness of the limo and his £2000 Gucci connected with the moonlit pavement. Then, the rest of his Conan-like body, which threatened to burst out of his shiny black tuxedo at any time, unfolded and he stepped out onto the street, only to be blinded by what seemed like a thousand brilliant flash bulbs and deafened by the combined screams of journalists desperate for an interview and fans begging for a closer look of their idol.

With a wry smile that suggested knowledge and worldliness far beyond his 25 years, Rex surveyed the frenzied scene around him and sighed as his brother, the equally handsome, muscular and talented Dex emerged from the other side of the motorcade, accompanied by another wave of flash-popping and more screaming and shouting. Dex remembered hearing that three entire police forces had been transferred in from the suburbs to cope with the tremendous crowd-control operation, and he could see that they were doing a sterling job of holding back the enthralled masses, even though a few of the more starstruck ones had brought along home-made shivs and zip guns in an attempt to get close to these gods of the green baize.

Dex glided around the car to meet his twin brother, the diamond-studded turnups of his handmage Armani snooker suit glinting in the pale moonlight. He opened his mouth to speak to Rex, but was interrupted by the flashing of red and blue lights and the wail of police sirens from behind him. He turned to see several police motorcycles turn into Sheffield High Street and cruise towards him, ahead of an armed police Sierra and two custom-built Securicor vans. Both Dex and Rex knew that the vans contained their cues for tonights' doubles match against their closest rivals - Rob and Bob Dogdish, the most fiendish and despised players in the sport. As the specially-transferred SAS commandos proceeded with the exacting security operation of transporting the two state-of-the-art million-dollar cues from the street into the famous Crucible Centre, Rex turned to Dex and placed his hand, which had been insured for an amount to obscene to even think about, on his brother's shoulder and looked at him.

"If only dad could see us know," he said proudly.

"Yeah," his brother replied, and with that they made their way up the marble steps under armed guard towards the entrance.

The Dogdish brothers were already there, snivelling and being generally weasley as they changed into their all-black snooker kit. Even the hands and face on their fake Cartier watches were black-on-black. It was their tasteless trademark. Bob sneered again as he wiped his ebony cue with the black teatowel and looked at his brother, who was doing the same.

"These pesky Hexagons," he said. "As long as they're around, we'll never get to the top of the professional Snooker ladder. 15 years ago we kill their dad so as to get our dad Bob Snr the world championship trophy by default, and what happens? Those bloody twin sons of his turn up and jointly win the world cup at the youngest age ever! I mean whoever heard of 11-year old world champions, for God's sake?!"

"Relaxsh, Bob," said his brother, who has cracked his teeth on a swing when he was seven and had a permanent, incurable and very embarassing lisp as a result. "Tonight we will ensure that those peshky Hexshagonsh will never bother ush again. Tonight we will be the championsh of the world! HA HA HA HA!"

"Yes, well," retorted his brother, somewhat cynically. "You realise that this all depends on our diabolical plan working according to plan. I mean we haven't got a hope in hell of beating them fair and square."

"You're sho peshimishtic," said Rob calmly. "Everything will be fine, you'll shee. Oncshe we have shucsheshfully framed with Hexshagon twins, we'll be home free. Nothing can go wrong."

"I hope you're right," his brother snivelled.

The hush as the Dogdish brothers entered the packed auditorium and took their seats was remarkable - nobody cheered, clapped, stood up or even acknowledged the existence of the two challengers. Even the referee Len Jones refused to shake hands with them, as was customary on these occasions, because they were so scum. Just to make his feelings known, he trod on Rob's toes as they passed and spat a blob of thick veiny phlegm into Bob's water jug.

The hushed silence turned at once into an ear-splitting crescendo as the Hexagon brothers drifted into the open-air stadium (the renovations had taken place a year previously to accomodate the 500,000 extra fans who had flocked to the sport since the arrival of the Hexagons) and took their seats. The two brothers noticed that this process could sometimes get a bit tiresome - they always had to wear earplugs to protect themselves from the 500-decibel applause and trying to get to your seat while the referee crawls after you, frantically trying to shine your shoes for you.

After about 20 minutes the applause finally started to die down, and the Crusible stewards came on to collect the bouquets of flowers, lacey undergarments, paper money and toilet rolls. After the game the Hexagon Memorial Foundation would distribute the goods to needy handicapped children around the country.

When the stadium was finally quiet, save the sound of an airliner passing far overhead, the referee introduced the players - again the same stoney silence for the Dogdishes - and set up the first frame.

The Hexagons, of course, won the toss. But as Rex (who always cued off first) asjusted the calibration on his cue's telescopic laser sight and adjusted the position of the cue ball, Bob Dogdish broke the silence by leaping from his chair and screaming at the top of his voice, "Stop the game!"

Everybody sat wide-eyed as Dogdish strolled confidently across the arena. What was this outrage?

"Ladies and gentlemen," Bob began, as he opened his waistcoat and reachd into his inside pocket, "I am sorry for this interruption, but I have an important announcement." He continued to walk across the tile floor until he was standing nose to nose with Hexagon. He sneered, then pulled from his waistcoat pocket an A4 envelope.

"An announcement," he continued, "which will change the face of Snooker as we know it and send the Hexagon twins into exile forEVER!"

WHAT IS DOGDISH'S ANNOUNCEMENT? WHAT SECRETS DOES THE MYSTERIOUS ENVELOPE HOLD? IS THIS THE END FOR THE HEXAGON TWINS?

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So come on, dive in! What's to be afraid of! Send your fiction to us at ACE Fiction, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And ACE readers could be reading your stuff next month!

SHOP WATCH

The Longhorn Strikes Back!

I was interested to read a letter from Mavis Nicholson in the last issue of ACE regarding the shoddy service she has experienced in computer shops. However, I am not going to make the mistake of attempting to defend the indefensible; everybody knows that there are bad computer shops, where the staff would rather talk to each other and play games rather than even acknowledge the person on the other side of the counter. Yes, there are bad computer shops, just like there are bad record, book, furniture and food shops. And nobody likes them: the customers, other retailers, software publishers and especially (judging by the editor's response to Ms Nicholson's letter) magazine editors. But surely the most appropriate response to persistent, surly, inefficient service is not to patronise the establishment again?

There are enough alternatives around for the majority of people not to have to shop at a place they despise and, if allegiances were switched, then the bad stores would either have to change or die. In a free-market economy the customer dictates which businesses prosper and which fail, so only purchase from stores that deserve your custom. Anyone who treats his customers like Ms Nicholson has been treated can hardly complain if he has an empty shop.

It is in everybody's interest for the good dealers to not only survive but also to grow. So if you have a good one close to you then spread the word.

ACE mentioned in its reply to Ms Nicholson's letter an organisation called NASCR (National Association of Specialist Computer Retailers) "which is supposed to keep an eye on this sort of thing". I'm afraid that's not quite true, unfortunately. What NASCR is is a self-policing group of independent computer stores who are trying to the standards of service in computer retailing and also to change certain aspects of the who computer trade for the benefit of everyone. It is a voluntary organisation whereby the members pay a fee to join and agree to a code of ethics. So it is unlikely the 'bad' retailers will be members anyway. And that is not to suggest that every NASCR member is a saint either, just that there is a batter than average chance of him being a good guy.

ACE also asked for example of actual physical abuse on customers by retailers. Well, if the smirking individual who formatted our demo Amiga 2000's hard drive would like to set foot back in the store then I'll happily get the dossier off to a flying start by breaking said individual's arms. Customer records, five years' worth of the best demos, templates for the shop's pricing tickets, shop correspondence, everything was wiped. I hope Ms Nicholson didn't come into our shop directly after that event - she would have seen one stupid old (thirtysomething) man weeping into his coffee and threatening to kill someone!

Actually, now I'm on this subject can I also mention something that *really really* annoys me?

When customers enquire about a computer the usual thing to do is to find out what the customer requires, make some suggestions and give a demonstration. This can take - depending on what use the customer had in mind - from five minutes to several hours. During this time we salespeople inevitably get to know the customers a little and vice versa, of course. Sometimes goods are purchased there and then, but usually the customer goes away to "think it over". What is *really really* hurtful is when you see this customer again perhaps a few days later and he comes up to you and buys, say, a box of blank discs. You look at him expectantly with your best cocker spaniel eyes and he puts you out of your misery by informing you so-bloody-matter-of-factly that he bought his machine from (a) a mail-order company because they were £20 cheaper, (b) a chainstore who were offering 0% finance, or (c) a bloke down the road. The hurt! The rejection! I've been used!

What is *really really really* annoying is when this customer then asks you to install his printer drivers or copy his system discs or make up a monitor lead for him (one person actually asked me to exchange his Amiga PSU - as it was still under warranty - because the mail-order company he had purchased from has ceased trading!). Then there was the customer who every Saturday spent two hours or more hunched over our demo equipment 'trying out' the new releases. This went on for many weeks until I eventually asked him if he actually had a computer as he never made any purchases. His calm answer was that he 'evaluated' the products in our store before making an informed purchase... through a mail-order company. I'd better stop now, as I'm actually doing what I deliberately set out not to do...

Can I just end then by saying that though it probably appears to be the best job in the world (after being Kate Bush's dresser) he can also have some bite-your-pen-in-half-through-sheer-bloody-frustration days as well., and the pre-pubescent might only have started that week, and the stupid old man wandering around muttering and cursing could even be Dirk himself wondering how on Earth to recover the files on his hard drive.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 inclusive (except ACE 11) at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to: **ACE Back Issues, PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 6AA.**

Here's a checklist of topics covered in some of our older issues – for a complete list of available issues, telephone 0858 410510 for more information...

- **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the US Air Force by Perceptronics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]
- **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]
- **BATTLETECH,** "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound and life-like controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]
- **CD-I** (Compact Disc Interactive) is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.
- **CDTV,** Commodore's attempt to bring multi-media to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]
- **COSMIC OSMO,** the world's first hypergame - courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermdia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.
- **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]
- **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]
- **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]
- **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]
- **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]
- **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]
- **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief - invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]
- **NEO-GEO**, the arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. [ACE32/34]
- **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]

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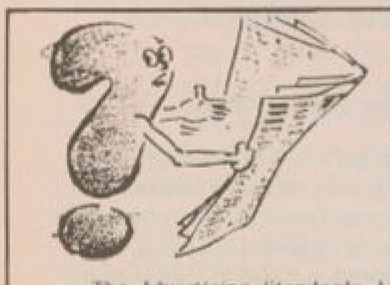

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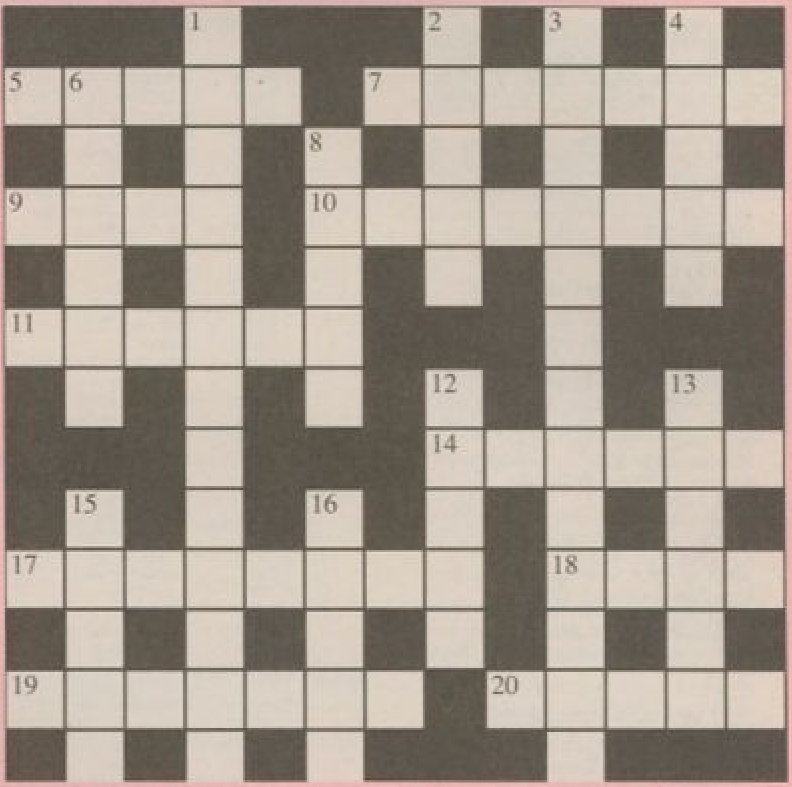


CLUES ACROSS

5 No charge to drop from 'Swords of Twilight' software house (4,4)
7 Kind of light wine one swallowed (4)
8 Changes code – Ed's put it in (5)
9 Elite game Leo and Dino played together (7)
10 Pa cures my new game from Virgin (9)
11 Being under twenty, she rules the game (4,5)
14 Rat torn to pieces in game (7)
15 Computer helping to write comic routing (5)
17 Loathe Gremlin game (4)
18 Everything shown by the runes I've cast (8)

CLUES DOWN

1 Flintstone's first from Ubi Soft (4)
2 Game that's a bit of a cult I'm assured (6)
3 Brown dog! (6)
4 Look out - leaders got Ron to form software house (8)
6 Be all-consuming! (3,2)
10 Clark Kent's translation of Ubermensch! (8)
11 Heighten general awareness about Domark subsidiary (6)
12 Duos rewriting after ex developed game from Origin Systems (6)
13 Banishment from Audiogenic (5)
16 A game of hazard from Leisure Genius (4)

HOW TO ENTER

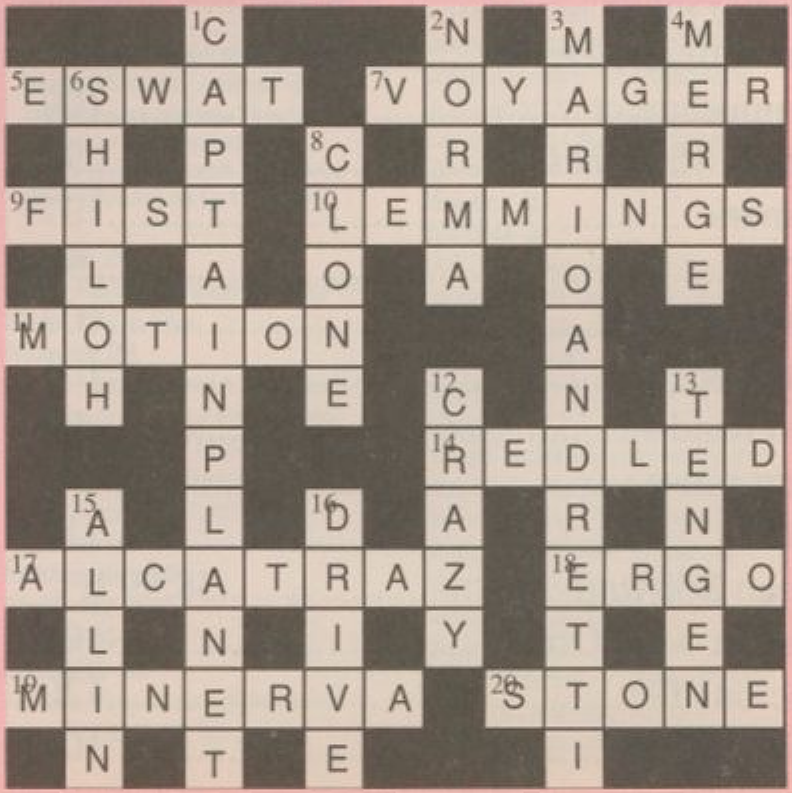
Every month we offer a free game worth up to £25 for your machine if you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat. The address to send your solution to is:

ACE September 91 Crossword,
Priory Court
Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

The deadline for entries is the first of the month but, as September 1st is a Sunday, entries received on Monday 2nd will be eligible.

JULY 91 RESULT

Winner of the July crossword was Patrick Stanley of London. August solution below – the winner will be announced next month.



■	■	■	1 C	■	■	■	2 N	■	3 M	■	4 M	■
5 E	6 S	W	A	T	■	7 V	O	Y	A	G	E	R
■	H	■	P	■	8 C	■	R	■	R	■	R	■
9 F	I	S	T	■	10 L	E	M	M	I	N	G	S
■	L	■	A	■	O	■	A	■	O	■	E	■
11 M	O	T	I	O	N	■	■	■	A	■	■	■
■	H	■	N	■	E	■	12 C	■	N	■	13 T	■
■	■	■	P	■	■	■	14 R	E	D	L	E	D
■	15 A	■	L	■	16 D	■	A	■	R	■	N	■
17 A	L	C	A	T	R	A	Z	■	18 E	R	G	O
■	L	■	N	■	I	■	Y	■	T	■	E	■
19 M	I	N	E	R	V	A	■	20 S	T	O	N	E
■	N	■	T	■	E	■	■	■	I	■	■	■

Our monthly prize word puzzler, set by the inimitable MIPS

Make sure you don't miss next month's competition – it'll be the last! To find out why, and what will replace it, don't miss next month's issue!

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P618	X - Press 1 (Samples)
P619	X - Press 2 (Samples)
P620	X - Press 3 (Samples)
P621	Nineteen - Paul Hardcastle
P622	Nepalm Death / Live Corruption
P623	Betty Boo - Doing The Boo (2 disks)
P624	Robocop - Music Demo (Bad Language 15+)
P625	Viz Slideshow
P626	Crionics Mega Demo
P627	Stealthy Collection
P628	Robocop Anim (From Film)
P629	Plane / Glass Ball Demo (Good)
P630	Flight Anim
P631	Huey Anim (Helicopter Demo)
P632	Balls on a Mirror Anim (1 meg)
P633	Highland Sword Anim (1 meg)
P634	Agatron 35 - Dog Fight Anim
P635	Wraith of the Domain (Game Preview)
P636	Star Wars - From Film (1 meg)
P637	Phenomena Enigma
P638	Abyss Compilation (Various)
P639	Bass 2 Megademo
P640	Dragons Lair 11 Preview
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P642	Evil Dead 11 - Horror
P643	Train Construction (Construction Set)
P644	Iraq Flight Demo (1 meg)
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P646	Walker Snap + Bottlehead (1 meg)
P647	Deathstar Megademo (1 meg + 2 disks)
P648	Elvira Game Demo
P649	Dr Who Theme Music
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P651	Light Cycle (1 meg + 2 disks)
P652	Scanners (2 disks) - From Film
P653	Robocop 11 Game Demo
P654	Lemmings Game Demo
P655	E-Swat Game Demo
P656	Not The Nine O Clock News
P657	X - Press Megademo 11
P658	X - Press Megademo 1
P457	808 State Remixes
P263	Arnold Schwarzeneger Demo
M010	Blus Brothers (3 disks)
P504	Brain Wave
P486	Bruce Lee
P496	Car And Unicycle
P375	Cool Cougar
P287	Dry Dock - Star Trek
P517	Fast Cars
P499	Fractal Flight (1 meg)
P440	Global Trash
P421	Ian And Mic Demo - (S- Express Music)

GAMES

P659	Air Ace 2
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P662	Sea Lance
P287	Little Wizards
P306	Drip (1 meg) - Brilliant!!
P325	Jumpy And Others
P591	Middle East Mania
G005	No Ones Mine 5
P302	Pac Man
P175	Push
P585	Puzzle Pro
P379	Return To Earth
P177	Running Boy
P593	Snake Pit
G051	Star Trek The Game (2 disks)
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U032	Demolisher
P428	Digi Tech Utils
U018	Game Music Creator
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P459	Music And Message (Boot Maker)
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ACE DIARY

AUGUST 1991

11-17th July SOFTWARE RELEASES

GBH: *Super Cars* (ST, Amiga £7.99). Re-released top-down racing game in futuristic setting. Further oldies from the Gremlin back catalogue to be released this week: *Impossamole* (ST, Amiga £7.99). *Footballer of the Year 2* (ST, Amiga £7.99). *Kid Gloves* (originally from Millenium – ST, Amiga £7.99). *Cloud Kingdoms* (also ex-Millenium – ST, Amiga £7.99).

Mindscape: *Blue Max* (ST £30.99). Air combat in World War I. *Das Boot* (ST £30.99). Submarine simulation.

Mindcraft/Electronic Arts: *Keys to Maramon* (Amiga £25.99). 360/Electronic Arts: *Armour Alley* (PC £29.99). Interplay/Electronic Arts: *Battlechess 2* (Amiga £25.99). Graphically-led chess game where the pieces actually materialise and fight one another for possession of the squares.

Ubi Soft: *Fast Lane* (PC £29.99). Five racing games: *Stunt Car Racer, Hard Drivin, Vite, Ferrari Formula One* and *Chicago 90*.

Empire: *Space 1889* (PC £29.99).

Sunday 11
Motor Racing: Hungarian Formula One Grand Prix in Budapest - can Nigel Mansell make up some of the deficit on Ayrton Senna?
Monday 12
Cricket: Final Day of the Fifth Test between England and West Indies, at The Oval. The grouse shooting season opens.
Tuesday 13
Wednesday 14
Thursday 15
Friday 16
Birthday of Madonna, in 1958.
Saturday 17
Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence, Indonesia. Football: First Saturday of the 1991-92 Barclays league season.

18-24th August SOFTWARE RELEASES

Cinemaware: *Double Double Bill* (Amiga £35.99). *TV Sports Football, TV Sports Baseball, Wings* and *Lords of the Rising Sun*, all in one package.

Mirror Image: *Sinbad* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). *Conflict Europe* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99).

Image Works/Konami: *Bill Elliots' NASCAR Racing*. (ST, Amiga £35.99). Motor racing game in Indy 500 style.

Electronic Arts: *Powermonger Clue Book* (£7.50). Hints, tips and tactics for *Powermonger* addicts. *EA Hockey* (Sega Megadrive £39.99). Ice hockey action game. *Battlechess* (CD-TV, price TBA).

Psygnosis: *Amnios* (ST, Amiga £25.99). Pilot your craft around several planets, destroy anything that moves, marvel at the graphics along the way. Psygnosis Sizzlers: *Blood Money* (Amiga £7.99, PC £9.99).

Empire: *Megatraveller 2* (PC £30.64). Follow-up to acclaimed strategy game (though it hardly seems a week since MT1 hit the streets).

Sunday 18
1959: the first Mini, produced by the British Motor Corporation, was unveiled today.
Monday 19
Tuesday 20
Wednesday 21
Thursday 22
The new law allowing pubs to stay open all day took effect on this day in 1988. Cricket: test match, England vs Sri Lanka, begins at Lords'.
Friday 23
Liberation Day, Romania. Middlesex County Council announced plans to open a new type of school, called 'comprehensive', on this day in 1948.
Saturday 24
Athletics: World Championships begin in Tokyo.

25-31st August SOFTWARE RELEASES

Image Works: *Xenon 2: Megablast* (CD-TV, price TBA). The graphics, the scrolling, and most importantly, the music, all on Amiga CD. *Falcon* (CD-TV, price TBA). Flight sim with heavy emphasis on realistic controls. Spectrum Holobyte: *Flight of the Intruder* (Amiga £30.99).

Mindcraft/Electronic Arts: *Rules of Engagement* (Amiga £25.99).

Lankhor/Ubi Soft: *Maupiti Island* (ST, Amiga £25.99). Ubi Soft: *Ironlord* (PC £29.99). Graphically-led mediaeval saga. *Winning Five* (ST, Amiga £25.99). Compilation comprising *Ironlord, Night Hunter, Twin Worlds, Puffy* and *Sir Fred*. *Pro Tennis Tour 2* (PC £29.99). About the nearest you can get to the real thing on computer at the moment.

Activision: *Beast Busters* (ST, Amiga £25.99). Defeat the zombies investing the city centre. *F-14 Tomcat* (PC £35.99). Flight sim based on plane featured in Top Gun.

Sunday 25
Motor Racing: Belgian Formula One Grand Prix at Spa.
Monday 26
Bank Holiday England and Wales. Tennis: US Open begins in New York. Anniversary of first BBC transmission of TV pictures using both images and sound, in 1936.
Tuesday 27
Wednesday 28
Thursday 29
Friday 30
Saturday 31
National Day, Malaysia National Day, Trinidad and Tobago.

1-7 September SOFTWARE RELEASES

Domark: *James Bond Collection* (ST, Amiga £29.99). Compilation comprising *Licence to Kill, Live and Let Die* and *Spy Who Loved Me*. *Thunderjaws* (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). Underwater mayhem with mutant sharks and the like in Tengen coin-op conversion, delayed from originally scheduled July release.

Mindcraft/Electronic Arts: *Magic Candle 2* (PC £29.99). Fantasy role-playing as you explore the dreaded domain of Gurtex. *Zone Warrior* (ST, Amiga £25.99). Platform game with five time-travel scenarios and plenty of mazes and puzzles en route.

Gremlin: *Pegasus* (ST, Amiga £25.99). Airborne shoot 'em up on horseback (!).

Lankhor/Ubi Soft: *Vroom* (£24.99). Racing game. Ubi Soft: *Music Master* (ST, Amiga, PC £34.99 - ST and PC with sound cartridge £44.99). Tutorial and composer package.

Empire: *Twilight 2000* (PC £30.99). Tank simulation. Deathbringer (ST, Amiga, PC £30.99). Multi-screen arcade-style game with you as Karn, man with a sword and a mission to wreak havoc.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 1
All Formats Computer Fair arrives in Leeds, at the University Sports Centre. Doors open 10.00am; Contact number for organisers: 0225 868100. Athletics: Final Day of World Championships in Tokyo.
Monday 2
Tuesday 3
1967: Sweden switched from driving on the left, to driving on the right hand side of the road. How?
Wednesday 4
Thursday 5
Friday 6
The UK industry's biggest exhibition, the Computer Entertainment Show opens at Earl's Court 2, London at 9.00am. Phone the information hotline on (0839) 500820 for details.
Saturday 7
ECES continues, plus All Formats fair in Victoria (info from the organisers on. 0225 868100).

THE BLITTER END

THE LAST WORD

Sob. Sniff. Yes, this is the last edition of The Blitter End. Reports of our death last month were, it seems, greatly exaggerated, but you can rest assured that this is definitely the last one ever. Really. But Blitter intends to go out with nothing less than a bang, with the sassiest gossip, bitingest wit and sharpest observations. Or maybe not.

*

After the appearance of a Mac Plus in an antique shop window in *Back To The Future II*, the Archimedes in *Capital City* and that Amiga 500 which constantly upstages the actors in Paul Robinson's office in *Neighbours*, we can now proudly add a new machine to the ranks of computer superstars. It's Atari's pocket-size wonder, the Portfolio, which crops up twice during the blockbusting *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. The young John Connor uses a customised version of the machine to crack the PIN number of a bank cash dispenser and later to break the code on a security door at the Cyberdyne Systems HQ, which as a result goes towards preventing a nuclear war which would have killed three billion people. And who was it who said that the Portfolio wasn't useful for anything?

*

Blitter has recently been subjected to a distressing amount of what can only be called... ahem, 'alternative' PD software. A disk submitted to us this month by a software company that shall remain nameless presented a rather disturbing adult interpretation of *The Flintstones*. Called something which rhymed with *The Duckstones*, it showed Fred, Wilma and a randy mammoth indulging in certain nocturnal activities that Hanna Barbera would definitely not have approved off. Worse, a new *Simpsons* demo is circulating, which shows Bart being caught, well, entertaining himself by Homer, who blasts the boy with a machine gun. Blitter feels so disturbed that its setting up a new watchdog service for this sort of thing. So if you've got any disks similar in style to those mentioned above, send them to us, under plain brown wrapper, at the usual ACE address. Just so that we can keep an eye on this disgusting trend.

*

It all started with *The Godfather Part II*. Now sequels are fast becoming all the rage in the game biz too - just recently we've had *Nebulus 2*, *Wing Commander 2* and *Terminator 2*, with *Lotus 2*, *Barbarian 2* (the Psygnosis one) and *3* (the Palace one), *Populous 2*, *RoboCop 3*, *Leisure Suit Larry 5*, *Die Hard 2*, *The Secret Of Monkey Island 2*, *Lemmings 2*, *Elite 2*, *Bubble Bobble 3*, *Indiana Jones 4*, *Kick Off 3*, *Turrican 3*, *Chuck Rock 2* and *Mercenary 3* all on the way. Is this healthy, Blitter asks? Well, why not, as long as the new games represent a significant advancement over the original and not just a cynical rehash. Keep 'em coming!

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Following the cancellation of the consumer side of the European Computer Entertainment Show at Earl's Court II in September, the Advancing Computer Entertainment Conference has been postponed. However, it WILL still be taking place, but at a date and place yet to be decided, with all the original speakers, including Chris Crawford and Brian Moriarty taking part. The competition is still on for free tickets - see last month's Blitter for details - and the closing date extended until 30th September. We'll keep you up to date with further developments on this exciting story.

*

Good news for all you lucky SAM Coupe owners! It's been exactly a year since SAM Computers relaunched its Spectrum-with-knobs-on at the All Formats Computer Fair, or so says a recent press release. To celebrate, there's a new £20 birthday pack coming out which includes a T-shirt, two games, a SAM poster, SAM Coupe pen and SAM Coupe drink coaster! The Blitter feels, however, that something more drastic is required than goody bags to revive the Coupe's fortunes. The way Blitter looks at it, it's been a year since the relaunch and STILL hardly anyone's bought it and there's STILL little software for it. Cause for celebration? We think not.

*

Just time for a few shorts before we pack our bags... Congrats to the ever-vigilant NCE for yet another Earth-shattering scoop, this time exclusively revealing Sega's 'secret' new *Time Traveller* coin-op on its front page - a month after it was released into UK arcades... And well done to a certain editor of a certain weekly games mag for managing to lock himself out of his car during a recent trade bash, then showing the patience of a saint while waiting for the breakdown services to arrive and let him in... Finally, a special Blitter kindness award goes out to big-hearted game reviewer Gary Penn, who did so much to help the aged, lending support and comfort to a lady far older and less capable than himself at a recent industry barbeque...

*

And so, that's it. It's a wrap. Finis. The end. It's time to say goodbye after 49 issues of faithful service. Wipe away those tears, however, as you can't keep a good Blitter down, and you never know where or when we might crop up again... But for now it's off to the quiet retirement cottage in the Dales for some relaxation in our twilight years, with no noisy computer games to disturb the peace and tranquility... Well, except maybe the odd game of *Oids*, *Kick Off 2* and *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge*. Oh, and *Tetris* on the GameBoy. And *Choplifter*. And *Bubble Bobble*. Oh, and let's not forget...

● **Blit Blit!**

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Big things are happening at ACE. Far too much to detail here. Turn to pages 48 and 49 for the full story...

Dear Mr Newsagent,

I've read all about the new ACE, and I'm drooling already. Copies will be flying off your shelves like a flock of starlings. So come the 8th of the month, be a gent and lock away a copy in safe storage especially *pour moi*.
There's a good fellow.

Name..
Address ....
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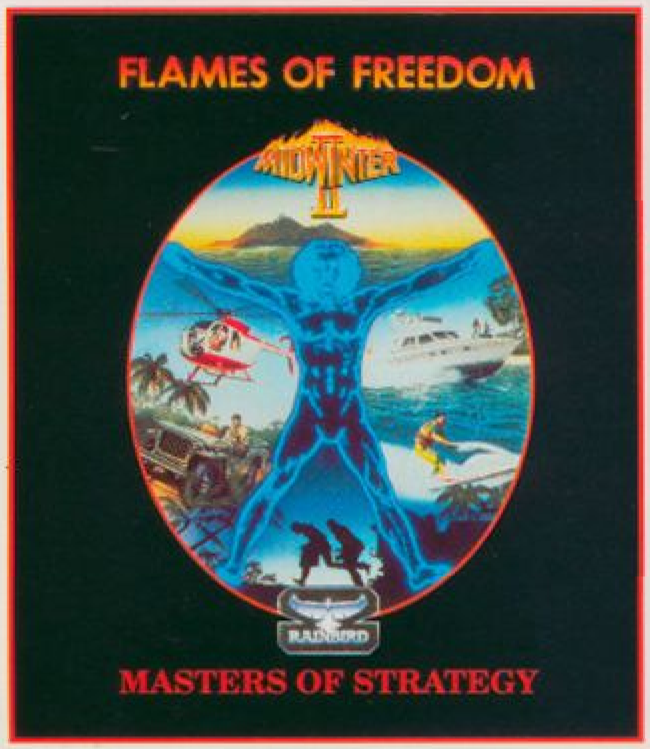
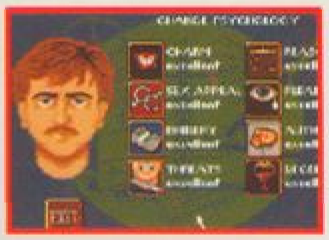
Flames of Freedom





Burning Ambition

The people of the Midwinter Isle have abandoned their homeland to join forces with the people of Agora, forming the Atlantic Federation. Their arch enemies, the Saharan Empire, control every one of the forty two Atlantic islands except Agora, running them as slave colonies. Resentment of the Saharans runs high, and as a special agent of the Atlantic Federation, you are charged with completing dangerous top secret missions designed to initiate rebellion on the islands, before the mighty Saharan armada sets sail for battle with your own island.

- Forty one missions, each with complicated sub-plots, offer you endless games within a game, combining action, adventure and strategy.
- Sophisticated character profile generators allow you to choose your own looks, sex, psychology and physical characteristics.
- Cover a million square miles of accurately mapped 3-D terrain, generated by light-sourced fractal techniques.
- Interact with over 1000 characters, each with an individual personal profile.
- Utilise 22 modes of transport, across land, seas and skies.
- Fight with over a dozen different weapons against a massive array of opposing firepower.

Push your body and your wits for hours on end against the most amazing, exciting and adventurous strategy game on your Atari ST, Commodore Amiga, and soon on IBM PC Compatibles.

Atari ST screen shots shown. Actual shots may vary.

C&VG 96% ACE 950 RAZE 96% Joystick 96%

"The sort of game others try to be but can't achieve"
94% The Satellite Times

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WANTED

BRAVE ADVENTURERS

NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

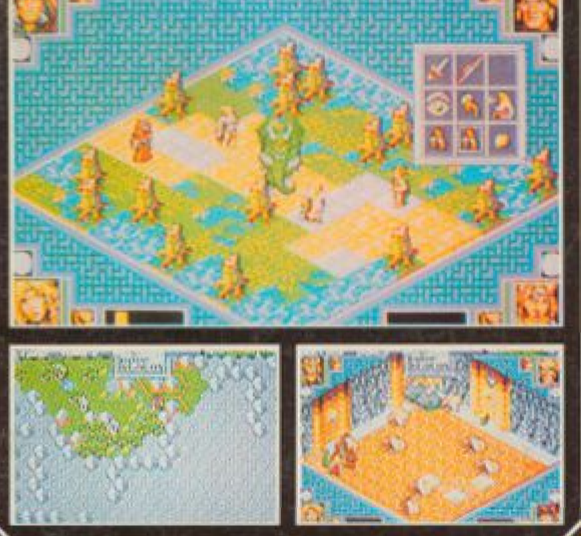
If you've ever pictured yourself as a Brave Adventurer but have been put off by the complexity of Role Playing Adventures this is the game for you.

Shadow Sorcerer has all the excitement and intrigue of AD&D®'s more complex adventures and also features the following "gamer friendly" innovations:

Shadow Sorcerer

- *100% "point 'n' click" icon control (no laborious typing).*
- *3D isometric play area giving you more control on the playing environment.*
- *Control up to 4 characters in a life or death struggle against evil.*
- *Hexagonal grid map aids strategic planning.*
- *Combat action adventure.*

This new concept in role playing adventures means that in minutes you could be confronting the Shadow Sorcerer, the down side is that within minutes you could also be dead!!



Screen shots from Atari ST version

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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